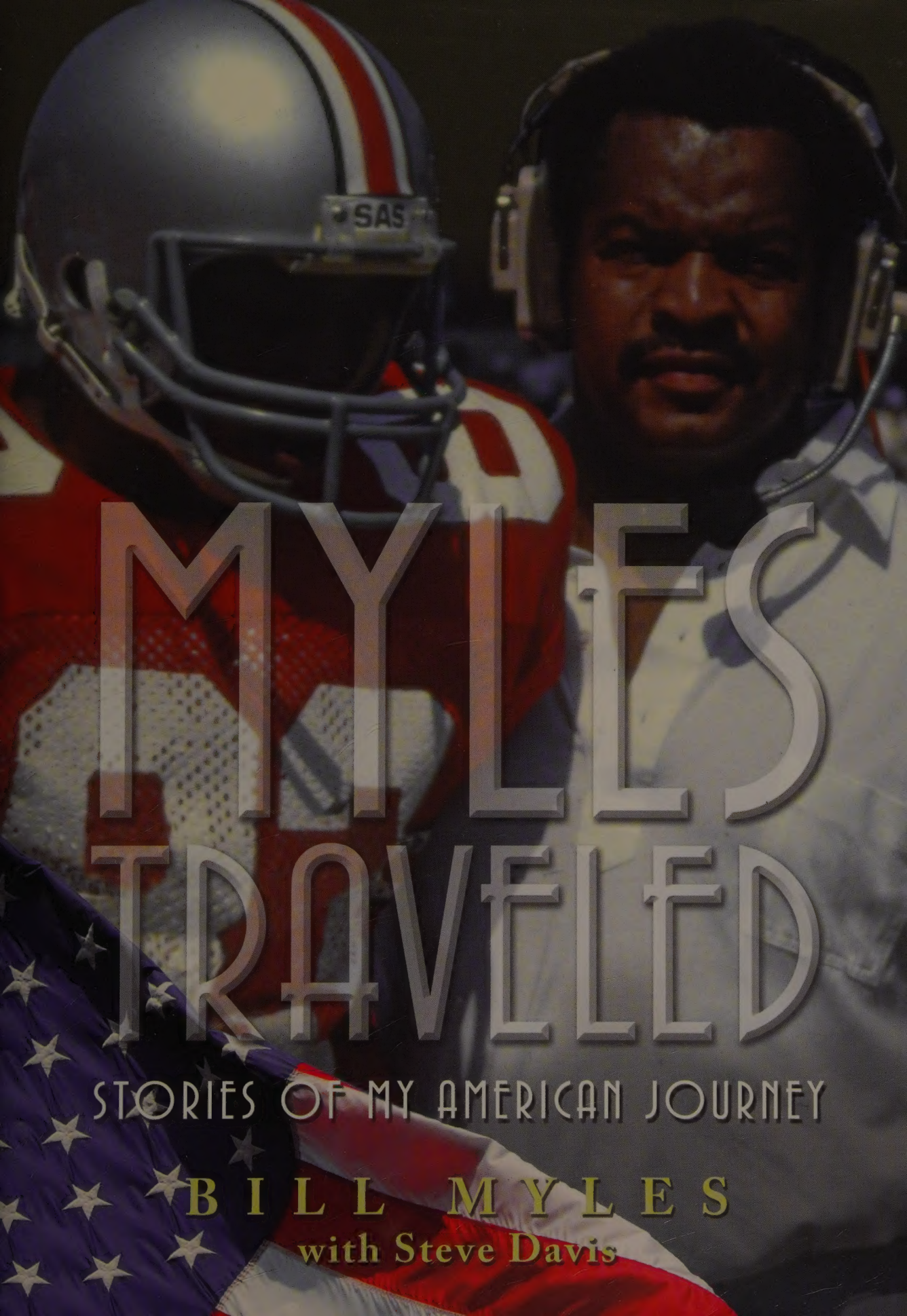
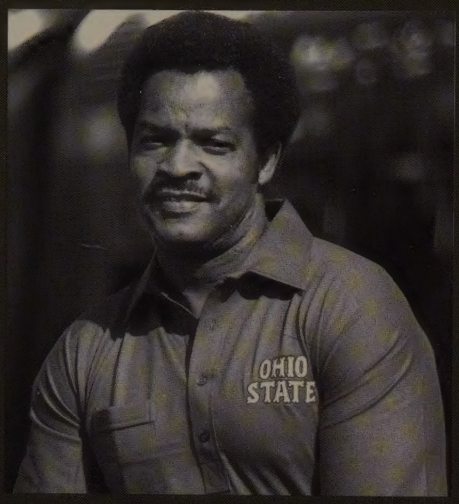

MYLES TRAVELED
STORIES OF MY AMERICAN JOURNEY
BILL MYLES
with Steve Davis



The book, *Myles Traveled: Stories of My American Journey*, recounts Bill Myles' 77-year journey in the United States, and it illuminates the role of athletes in the country's transition from slavery and segregation to equality and integration. Set in Kansas City, Missouri; Lincoln, Nebraska; and Columbus, Ohio, this absorbing personal narrative of sports history is rich with Bill's humor, wisdom, and life lessons acquired from 45 years of coaching. The book provides detailed information about Bill's remarkable coaching at Lincoln High School in Kansas City, the University of Nebraska, and The Ohio State University.

The journey comes alive through Bill's storytelling, his insider's view of sports, and his revealing and often humorous anecdotes. As Bill pulls back the curtain on his life experiences as a child from a loving family, an athlete, a history teacher, and an outstanding coach, an amazing story of how sports have helped America to realize its objectives of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" is told.

Readers of *Myles Traveled* are also introduced to other athletic figures who helped to shape America, such as Jackie Robinson, Joe Louis, and Woody Hayes.

While *Myles Traveled* is a sports story, it is also a message of faith, family, love, and hope.

In the words of Jim Lachey, OSU All-American, "*Myles Traveled* is a great story. It's an inspirational story. It's the American Dream."

U.S. $34.99

CDN $45.00

To Jeff

Enjoy Coach Myles' stories
and learn from his
life lessons. It is
great working with you.

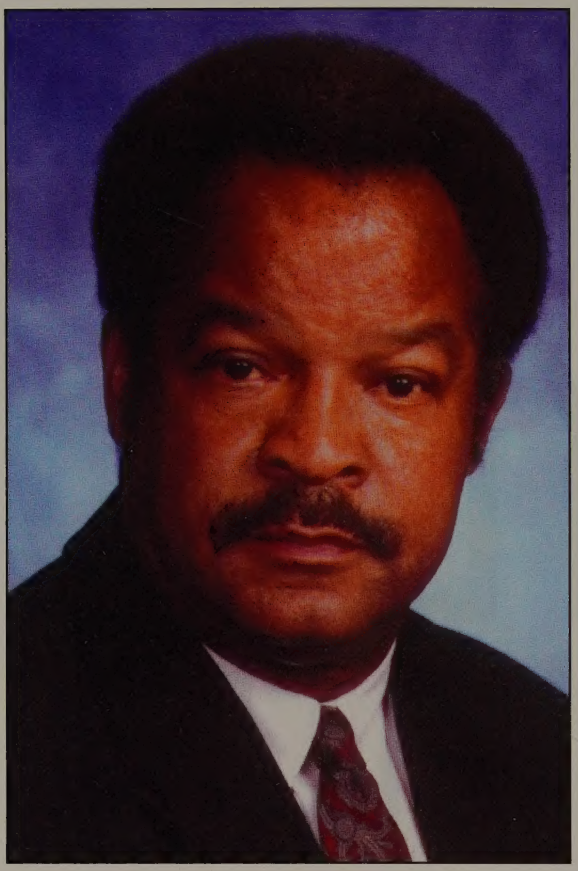
All the Best

Go Bucks!

Steve

MYLES TRAVELED

STORIES OF MY AMERICAN JOURNEY



William (Bill) Myles
Born on Nov. 21, 1936
Kansas City, Missouri

MYLES TRAVELED

STORIES OF MY AMERICAN JOURNEY

BILL MYLES
with Steve Davis

Barnhardt & Ashe

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I extend special thanks to Lorita Jane, the true love of my life, best friend, and my wife, whom I will forever cherish. Her absolute dependability, along with her emotional, cultural, and intellectual support made this book possible.

Moreover, this book is the result of many years of joy, laughter, and happiness due to the never-ending love and patience of my daughter, Debora; my son, Bill and his wife, Janet; and my grandchildren, William IV and Kennedi. They have helped to make me the man—Daddy/Dad/Big Daddy—that I am today. They inspired me to write *Myles Traveled: Stories of My American Journey.*

My parents, William O. and Vera Luvenia Myles provided the foundation that enabled me, as well as my brothers, to succeed in life. Because of their love and guidance, my stories in *Myles Traveled* demonstrate the high levels of achievement that are possible in the United States, in spite of obstacles such as racial, social, and economic discrimination. With undergraduate and graduate degrees, my two brothers and I, at one time or another, have served as a musician, lawyer, pastor, coach, writer, teacher, or administrator. Our parents were our rock. They taught by example and instilled in us the philosophy of hard work, social responsibility, and moral behavior. Thanks to them, I was able to write a positive story of my life, *Myles Traveled.*

To my friends, players, and mentors, I extend my sincere thanks for time given to improve this publication through their interviews, resources, and encouragement. Their input has enriched the book. One friend, in particular, is Nancy Dorsey who made many trips to Columbus in order to read the manuscript, assist in editing, and provide suggestions, along with prayers. Other supporters include Mark Kuntz, Robert Buchler, Jim Buford, Charles Coulter, Robert Wedgeworth, Harry Slawter, and Arman Habegger. I am indebted to these individuals and many others, who are too numerous to list here. My appreciation of the unique contribution of each person who supported this work is greater than words can express.

An extremely important contributor to this publication is Steve Davis, who helped me to realize my dream to write this book. He assisted me in putting my thoughts and ideas on paper. He spent months interviewing, taping, listening, and writing. Without him, this book would not have materialized.

Finally, I thank the publisher of this book, Barnhardt & Ashe. The B & A staff provided editing and insights that greatly enhanced the quality of the book. I will be forever grateful for all the help that the company provided.

William (Bill) Myles
June 2014

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FOREWORD

On November 21, 1936, the Ohio State Buckeyes defeated Michigan 21-0 in Ohio Stadium. That same day, a baby boy was born in Kansas City, Missouri, and christened William Myles Junior.

Forty-one years later, that little boy was coaching for the legendary Buckeyes. *Myles Traveled* is the story of his journey. Beginning in a two-room schoolhouse, it travels through Drake University, the high schools of Kansas City, stops at the Nebraska Cornhuskers, and then triumphs in the stadium of Ohio State University, the pinnacle of college football. More than one man's journey, it is a story of the American Dream.

As a teacher, Bill Myles likes reading sports, biographies, and history. He is a master storyteller, who can reveal life adventures of great Americans, such as Jim Brown, Bill Russell, Joe Louis, Jackie Robinson, and Jim Parker. He talks about sports heroes, as well as wise people who have excelled in other fields. Listening to him is enlightening because Bill has had the opportunity to rub elbows with these people; and, more importantly, there is always a message in his stories.

Bill was Ohio State's Associate Athletic Director when I joined the Department in 1985. I worked alongside him and benefited from his knowledge. I watched players whom he had coached come back to sit and talk with him. If they were struggling, Bill figured out how to help. I admired the impact he had on young people. As Bill and I traveled and spent time together, we became more than coworkers. We became friends.

Coach Myles and Woody Hayes also worked together and became friends. Bill can study people and figure out what makes them tick. He did this with Woody, and that is why they had a good relationship. Nobody knows how to tell "Woody Stories" like Bill Myles.

Bill respected his coworkers as well as his players. If they were good, he knew how to keep them playing at that level. If they were not, he helped them to improve. They loved him, respected him, and responded to him.

One of Bill's players described him as "a model for how to live your life." Read his story, *Myles Traveled*. When you are done, you will understand why, for me, Bill Myles has always been "The Man."

Archie Griffin
Two-time Heisman Trophy Winner
CEO, The Ohio State University Alumni Association

INTRODUCTION

I have always liked to read and study biographies. This one is mine!

I want to know what makes people great, how they think, what drives them, what adversities they had to overcome. I just finished Senator Edward Kennedy's memoirs. I have read the same by Clarence Thomas. They are two different people, but I can learn from everyone. I just read *All Rise,* Alan Page's story. He graduated from our own Canton Central Catholic High School; he was a pioneer at Notre Dame; and then he became a feared member of the NFL Vikings' "Purple People Eaters." That was not enough. Alan attended law school at the same time he was playing pro football, and later became an Associate Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court. How could you not learn from someone who has done all that? I have read the biographies of great coaches. Years ago, I read the life story of Bear Bryant. What made the Bear tick? I read about Amos Alonso Stagg and what he did. I came to like these biographies, athletes or not, because I learned what drove them to overcome obstacles in order to achieve their objectives in life. If they had not been motivated by extraordinary goals, they could not have written inspirational biographies.

I wanted to know how they think. When I met Jesse Owens, I wanted to know why he called everybody Champ. When I met Muhammad Ali, I wanted to get a clue that helped to explain his unique character. It was the same with Coach Woody Hayes. When I was at Nebraska, I studied Woody. What was his deal? What made him tick? Of course, when I went to work for him, I found out! After reading about my work with him, hopefully you, too, will learn more about the man.

All my life I have read about great athletes. Joe Louis, Jackie Robinson, Ted Williams, Joe DiMaggio, Stan Musial. No matter what sport they represented, I read about them. When I wanted to learn more about boxing, I read why certain groups of people excelled in the sport. It was always the poor. I read about Jack Dempsey and Irish Bob Murphy. Jack Dempsey was a coal miner. Bob Murphy's people were firemen and fighters. Then blacks joined the boxing champions, and they were tough. Now the Mexicans are outstanding fighters. Boxing is the hardest dollar one can earn in sports, and the people who have the hardest time in life are the people who excel in the boxing arena.

I wanted to know how competitive athletes were. How did they go about it? I listened to them talk through their books. These guys all had something that drove them. Stan Musial was from the coal mines in Pennsylvania. His father was a Polish immigrant. Ted Williams did not have a father figure at home, and he discovered that he could hit a baseball. With Ali, somebody stole his bicycle. Ali wanted to learn to fight so that when he found the guy who stole his brand new bicycle, he could give him a whipping. Although Ali had always possessed competitive fires, the guy who stole his bicycle caused those fires to become inflamed.

Athletes are not my only interest. I have read the biographies of Presidents Washington, Lincoln, Truman, and Eisenhower. What enabled these men to rise above their competitors? They always had somebody strong—a mother, a father, a mentor—to believe in them and support them. What caused Abe Lincoln to read by candlelight at night? What drove George Washington? How did he survive and win battles over superior and professional British troops during the American Revolution, even though he commanded many undisciplined and untrained soldiers? You would think he was Superman.

I have also read the biography of Reverend Billy Graham. How did he get his calling? One of the most recent books I read is about the life of A. G. Gaston. Born impoverished in a log cabin in 1892, in the Deep South, he died a century later with a business empire worth well over $130 million. His influence has been measured against that of J. P. Morgan and Andrew Carnegie. How did he get there?

In reading these books, I learned that there are many ways you can do it. You can do it by being studious like Tom Osborne. You can do it the military way, like Woody. You can accomplish it by being a student of the craft and of psychology like Earle Bruce and Jim Tressel. You can do it by being a great teacher and a great recruiter like Urban Meyer.

You are going to hear about *Place* in this book. There are many "common Joes" who have succeeded in life. You have to be in the right *place*, and have something or somebody to help you get on the right track. Lincoln had his mother. Satchel Paige had Edward Byrd. Ali's mother was behind him. Joe Louis's mother tried to get him to play the violin. Instead, he went boxing at the gym to escape the gangs in Detroit. He supposedly carried his boxing gloves in his violin case in order to appease his mother by making her think that he was practicing music.

You might expect *Myles Traveled* to be a football book—games, plays, players, and stadiums. Well, there is plenty of that. But my story transcends locker room jokes and X's and O's, because that is the way my life has been lived. My story must begin on that nineteenth century slave auction block in Pilot Point, Texas, and continue through the remarkable changes in America as we begin the second decade of the twenty-first century.

When we started this project, I was asked, "Why do you want to do a book?"

"I want to do it for my family, for my grandkids and their grandkids," I answered. Truth is, there is more. I want to do it for my people. I want to do it for my University. I want to do it for those who have touched me—the teachers, the coaches, the mentors, the civil rights figures of the last 150 years. I want to do it for the athletes whose lives I touched, and whose lives touched mine. Lastly, I want to do it for those who will come after me so that they can see how far we have come as a Nation.

I started with the idea of what makes people tick. In the following pages, you will learn what winds my clock. I hope that you can learn from—and enjoy—the tick tock of the miles I have traveled.

William (Bill) Myles

Pregame

Pilot Point, Texas

Circa 1867

Prologue

THE AIRSTRIP

The private plane was waiting for me on the isolated runway at a farm outside of Columbus, Ohio. It was the fourth quarter in the game of my life.

I had driven there alone in the early morning hours of December 30, 1987, and not even my wife Lorita knew where I was headed. As far as the ground crew understood, the official flight plan was to an unnamed destination in Florida. However, that was a ruse. As the plane roared down the runway, only the two pilots and I knew the truth about where we were actually going, and why. While the personal jet of one of the most successful businessmen in the Midwest climbed through the clouds, I surveyed the scene. Up front were two pilots. Behind them, in the cabin, I sat alone. That was it. A crew of two ferried me, their single passenger, to my secret destination.

The plane leveled off at cruising altitude and we flew south towards Florida. Somewhere over the Ohio River, we reached the turning point. The pilot radioed the ground that we had hit some turbulence and we were going to fly around it for a while. He slowly eased the nose of the plane to the right and we headed southwest towards our clandestine target.

As we headed in our new direction, my life's journey to that point played before me. We were flying parallel to the Mason-Dixon line, and it was fitting. I thought of my grandmother as a child growing up south of that line. I thought of my father as a young black man finding his way. I thought of my mother, the Christian Scientist practitioner, and the little two-room black school in segregated Missouri where I spent my first seven years. There was high school, college, and many mentors along the way.

As we left that turning point behind in the jet vapor, I thought about the turning point in my own life. It was a night back in 1971 when Frazier beat Ali, a night after which my own life would never again be the same. I thought of my mother's role, and how, were it not for her and that turning point, I likely would not be sitting in this plane representing the world-renowned athletic department of one of the greatest Land Grant Institutions in the Nation.

Mostly though, I thought of *Place,* and the role that it played in so many turning points along my journey. A devout Christian, I have always tried to live a humble and unassuming life. The Lord will judge if I have succeeded at that. However, I must confess: As I sat there in the luxury of that private plane, the sole cargo of those two pilots, I also thought of the boys standing on the corner of 43rd and Broadway back in Kansas City, Missouri. *If only they could see me now!*

Fly me till I sweat, I thought. *I'm not the chauffeur. I'm the guy being chauffeured.*

I, William Myles, Jr., was Associate Athletic Director at The Ohio State

University, and I was on a covert mission for the Buckeyes. Before you can understand where I was going, however, you need to know from whence I came, and how I arrived. That is my story. The journey I was on began not on that private airstrip in Columbus, Ohio. It started much earlier—in the early 1860s, somewhere deep in Texas.

Chapter 1

ROOTS

Place

The place you seek is seeking you, the place you need heeds you. Divine Principle brings need and supply together for mutual good. He wisely, intelligently and lovingly controls, guides, protects, prospers and blesses this union of His idea (man) and this normal, joyous activity (work). The large upper room is even now furnished and prepared and waiting for you . . .

Author Unknown

I love to talk sports, and spin stories of the world I have lived in. This is a collection of those moments.

Although Ohio State plays a major role in my story, it does not begin in Columbus. To understand my story you must know the journey. Before the Buckeyes, there were Huskers. Before Huskers, Knights; and before the Knights were the Tigers, Cardinals, and Monarchs.

This is a story about *Place*. The Horseshoe in Columbus is just the last of the places. Before Columbus, there was Lincoln. Before Lincoln, there was Kansas City. Before Kansas City, there was Tulsa; and before Tulsa, there was Pilot Point, which was the real beginning.

The fall color of a burning red maple tree is embedded in its DNA. The prized ash wood used in our major league baseball bats is selected for where the tree was grown. The mighty, towering oak is strong not because of what you see above ground, but because it is rooted in that long taproot that quietly burrows deep into the rich soil below. So it is with who I am. I am a product of my ancestors and where I was grown. I am rooted in the rich environment where I was planted. This is my story—the beginning of my life in sports, and the road to the Horseshoe. The stories and journeys that I am about to share with you will explain my personal life development as well as shed light on the growth of the United States.

To know my story is to know the roots of my life, which extend back to the 1860s, before the end of the Civil War, back to somewhere deep in Texas. The day was maybe scorching hot, and likely dusty. There was a crowd. In that crowd, white faces would have been staring up at an auction block, a block on which stood a black man or woman, holding a baby and trembling in fear.

Perhaps the father or mother held that baby girl. It is possible that the

entire family was sold together or broken up. There is no written history. I do not know. I do know one thing. The baby girl on the auction block that day was sold, as a slave. You see, I heard that from her own mouth because that baby was Martha Morris Myles, my grandmother.

Imagine being a child in that world, owned by another, a master who could control everything you did and became. That master might have been kind; or, the master might have been evil, with the power to split your family, to work you hard in the summer heat, and to deny you the chance to learn to read and write. Fate and that master determined your life. For those living today, thankfully it is a world we have never known. It is hard for many even to comprehend such a world. Yet, that is the world of my ancestors. It makes my story remarkable, and that is the reason, for history's sake, I am obligated to tell it.

My story begins on that auction block in Texas. Dad told me that my grandmother was in her early thirties when she gave birth to him. Dad was born in 1897, so that would have put grandmother's birth around the time of the Civil War. Of course, President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation took effect on January 1, 1863; but, in reality, it did not free the slaves because it only applied to the rebel states of the South, and they considered themselves independent and governed by Jefferson Davis—not Abraham Lincoln. However, after the Confederacy was defeated in April 1865, slavery was abolished by the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in the same year. All former rebel states had to sign the Amendment as a condition for proper reconstruction and the return of full rights. Texas did not meet all the Congressional requirements of Reconstruction until 1870, when the state ratified the 13th Amendment on February 18. Not only was grandmother sold on the auction block before the Civil War ended, she was among the last of black Americans who had to experience the horror of slavery.

It is remarkable. This lady was sold as a slave, yet raised her son, my father, to be a successful and wise man who believed in education. Nearly 100 years after her birth, her son would watch his own three sons earn six college degrees. It is the story of the American Dream.

I do not know much about Grandmother's early years. She married John Henry Myles, and they had four sons and a daughter. Harvey and Harry followed Henry, who would die six weeks after his birth. Then on November 27, 1897, in Dallas, my father, William O. Myles Sr. was born. Dad's sister, Alice, was born later.

Grandmother came to live with us in the 1940s. She was the only grandparent that I knew. She had long hair that hung over her shoulders and flowed down to her waist. She was a very attractive woman. While I was growing up, Grandmother often told me stories about her life, and I became one of her closest grandchildren. When I was fourteen, she died in her eighties, a remarkable age for someone born into slavery in the 1860s.

Dad was born in Dallas, but later lived in Gainesville, Texas. My father only had two pictures of his own father. He had one picture of his dad alone. He had another picture of himself, at age eight, sitting on a horse with his dad. That was it. That was the last time he ever saw his father, and it was all he had to remember him. Dad never said his father deserted him, but he

never said that he sent money back to his family, either. He definitely did not have a father in his life after age eight. Often when a young man grows up without a father, it has a negative effect on how he treats his own children. This was not true in my Dad's case.

Vera L. Phillips, my mother, was born to Michael and Angeline Phillips in Pilot Point, Texas, on Valentine's Day in 1900. Mom was the baby of 13 children. Her father had a big farm, which was somewhat out of the ordinary for black Americans in those days. I have a 1908 picture of my mother's family. In it, Mother was about eight. Although there were 13 children, only 12 are in the picture. One had already passed. All of Mother's brothers and sisters in the picture are grown, and Mother is still a little girl. With Mom being the baby of 13, her parents were old, so I never knew my Grandpa and Grandma on Mom's side. Mom had nieces and nephews older than she was. She had brothers that had died before she married at the age of 21. I met some of my mother's brothers, but I never met any of her sisters.

I do not know much about my parents' early lives. After all, it has been more than a hundred years. I do know, however, the story of their marriage. This story needs to be told next because it reveals an ugly episode in United States history—an episode that almost got in the way of my parents' marriage. If not for luck, there might not have been a marriage and the birth of a Bill Myles to make the journey that I am about to take you on.

Chapter 2

GREENWOOD

In June of 1921, my parents were to be married. Mother was teaching first grade in Texas, while Dad was working in Tulsa, Oklahoma. We had relatives and close friends who owned a prosperous grocery store in Greenwood, the area of Tulsa north of the Frisco railroad tracks. At that time Greenwood was one of the wealthiest black communities in the United States. It was sometimes referred to as the Black Wall Street. One author has described it "as comparable to Beverly Hills today." Greenwood was Harlem before Harlem.

Greenwood was founded in 1906 when a wealthy black American by the name of O. W. Gurley purchased land in the north part of Tulsa. The laws of segregation dictated that this area was to be sold only to blacks. As Greenwood grew, the black community built along Greenwood Avenue, on what was called the other side of the tracks. Residents had great pride and ownership in this self-contained community. It was their own.

Along Greenwood Avenue were the offices of important black professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, bankers, and educators. By 1921, when Dad was there, it was home to more than 10,000 blacks, and its commercial district included restaurants, clothing stores, shops, grocery stores, dry goods, churches, banks, theatres, nightclubs, libraries, and schools. Reports tell of more than 600 black-owned businesses there. It had everything needed to support a thriving, self-contained, upper class black society. Hannibal Johnson wrote that at times, there were 15 well-known black physicians in Greenwood, including one "the Mayo Brothers described as the 'most able Negro surgeon in America.'" In addition, two newspapers were published there.

The area flourished with the Oklahoma oil boom. Greenwood contained numerous black businessmen who were reported to be multimillionaires. For blacks from the South, it represented hope. Yet the success of this community also represented a threat to the white residents of Tulsa.

Against that backdrop, my father was working there on May 31, 1921, when one of this country's worst acts of racial violence began. Dad got caught up in it on a day when he should have been preparing to travel home for his marriage to my mother. Known as the Tulsa Race Riot, it is described as the single worst incident of racial violence in United States history.

The riots apparently began after a young black man stepped on the foot of a white female elevator operator. The paper reported it as an attempted rape, and a white vigilante mob attempted to lynch the young man. When that failed, authorities did little as the large angry white mob retaliated by looting and setting fire to the whole of Greenwood. It is reported that in a 16-hour period, more than 10,000 were rendered homeless, more than 1,200 homes

and businesses were looted and destroyed, and up to 300 were killed. One of the most prosperous black communities in the United States was destroyed, with property loss estimated at nearly $2 million.

In the chaos of the Tulsa Riot, there was no communication. Blacks were rounded up. My father told me he slept in a public park. Many blacks were held there at night. They were released in the morning only if they had jobs and had to go to work. For several days, Mother did not know if Dad were dead or alive. I can only imagine her panic.

Being there, my father must have had his own account of what happened, but Dad never wrote anything down. He never talked about it. I later learned that others who were there did not talk either; and for a very long time, the riot was a well-kept secret. When I taught history in Kansas City in the 1960s, I never taught about the Tulsa Race Riot. At that time, forty years after the event, there was still nothing about it in the United States history textbook that our school used.

One person did write it down, and his halting words could speak for my father. In researching *Take Up the Black Man's Burden,* author Charles E. Coulter uncovered G. Archibald Gregg's description of the Tulsa Race Riot. Originally published on July 2, 1921 in the *Kansas City Sun,* Gregg's account went unnoticed until Coulter discovered it. It is ironic. Charles Coulter had family in Tulsa as well, and Charles told me that, just like my dad, they did not talk about the riot.

Archibald Gregg was in Tulsa working too, like Dad. Gregg was absent though during the actual riots; he was in Kansas City for his daughters' graduations. Nevertheless, Gregg's gripping account of the Tulsa he left and the Tulsa he returned to vividly captures the horror of what I think my father endured, and the anguish of blacks and whites who were caught up in that awful day. The original article by Gregg is difficult to decipher in places, as evidenced by the [sic] marks in Coulter's reprinting. In what Coulter termed "one of the few surviving descriptions of the aftermath," G.A. Gregg recounts the opportunities and positive outlook the residents of Tulsa experienced before the riots. When he left Tulsa for his daughters' graduations, he came back to a completely different world. However, despite this setback to the community, Gregg goes on to offer a hopeful solution, one that eliminates hate. As he stated in his 1921 article, "We need a nearer approach to the principles and teachings of the Golden Rule." This need is still with us today.

My father did not write those words, but I think Gregg captured exactly how Dad would have felt when he said that hate cannot exist in a society with Christian values. That is exactly the way Dad would later raise us to view how man should treat his fellow man. It is difficult for me to read Gregg's words. I picture the horror my mother must have endured, until she learned my father had survived. I feel the anguish of my father, a proud young man forced to sleep in a park, to wear a badge, and to get permission to come and go, all because of the color of his skin.

Just as Gregg and my father were both in Tulsa, they both left. My Dad left in June and G. A. Gregg left that same summer. Little did anyone know then that their paths would later cross again, as the path of G. A. Gregg and my own would. *Place* was at work. You see, when G. A. Gregg left Tulsa at the

end of the summer he became the new executive director at a YMCA in Kansas City, where my father and mother would soon head. That connection and its significance is for later in my story.

Eventually, Dad was able to make his way back from Tulsa to my mother in Texas. The riot-postponed wedding finally took place in Pilot Point on July 14, 1921, and some time afterwards Mom and Dad moved north to Kansas City.

I wonder now how much my future was ordained by the rioting in Tulsa? Would Mom and Dad have gone to Tulsa instead of Kansas City, had it not been for the riot? Had Mom and Dad planned to go to Kansas City, or were they going to Greenwood until it burned? In 1921, Kansas City was a thriving city full of culture and opportunities for blacks. But so was Greenwood, until the riots. Dad was working in Tulsa. We had family there. Greenwood was a thriving and rich black community. There was opportunity. Dad had connections. Did my folks plan to settle in Tulsa rather than Kansas City? Instead of Lincoln High, would I have played for Booker T. Washington in Tulsa? Would the colleges have still come around calling? Could it be that there may not have been any Paseo YMCA, any Kansas City Monarchs? No Joe Louis, no Jackie Robinson, no Buck O'Neil? No Eighteenth and Vine? No Westport? If Tom Osborne had not come calling, would Barry Switzer have? Would there have been a Woody Hayes? How much of my life would have been different if there had not been a race riot in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921, even before I was born?

It may appear that so much of one's life is divined by fate and chance. Not so in my world. I started Chapter 1 of this journey with *Place,* and I have always believed in that. *Place* brought my parents to Kansas City in the Roaring Twenties, and what a *place* it would prove to be.

"Kansas City and the Roaring Twenties," is one more topic that needs discussion as we turn the page to the first quarter of my life. Let me tell you why.

First Quarter

18th & Vine
Kansas City, Missouri

The Roaring Twenties

Chapter 3

A ROARING K.C.

The Roaring Twenties describes the decade in which my parents were married, but it just as aptly portrays the Kansas City where they settled in 1921. Economic growth followed WWI, and the '20s brought a changing way of life. Henry Ford put middle class America on wheels. Sound recording brought phonograph records. Radio became the first medium for mass communications using the airwaves. Electricity reached more people and telephone lines began crisscrossing the country.

The Roaring Twenties, without a doubt, contributed to America's social and cultural vigor. Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig were building the Yankee Dynasty. Overnight, "talkies" replaced silent films. In 1920, women finally got the right to vote. Black American literature and arts advanced under the banner of "The Harlem Renaissance." When WDAF Radio in Kansas City began broadcasting the Night Hawk Blues in 1922, people in thirty-one states listened. Then there was Jazz.

The place and time my parents settled was a "coming together." Kansas City was a geographic confluence, set below a hairpin turn where the Missouri and Kansas Rivers join in wide-river bottoms, and head east to the Mississippi. It was one place where Lewis and Clark camped while exploring the area acquired by the 1803 Louisiana Purchase. K.C. was a confluence of trails, where in 1833 Westport and the Westport Landing served as the jumping-off point for the Oregon, Santa Fe, and California Trails. It was also a confluence of twelve railroads, where the country's second busiest train center gave rise to the great Kansas City Stockyards sprawled on the vast west bottoms of the two great rivers.

Kansas City was a convergence of boundaries as well. Split down the middle by a state line, there is a Kansas City, Missouri and a Kansas City, Kansas. The two states also contrasted. One consequence of the Missouri Compromise of 1820 was the admission of Missouri to the Union as a slave state in 1821, although it remained part of the Union during the Civil War. Just across the river was Kansas, which entered the Union as a free state in 1861.

Beyond the joining of physical things, Kansas City, Missouri connected ideas with opportunities. These ideas would later shape my life in ways my parents could never have predicted when they were young and newly married. The opportunities that would later await me were unimaginable in 1921.

My parents were not alone in their migration to Kansas City. A display in the Negro Leagues Museum states that in 1879, blacks in Nashville encouraged others to leave the South and to move to the North and West for better opportunities. According to the Museum's exhibit, approximately forty

thousand blacks resettled in Kansas in less than two years, while others moved farther west and to the North.

During and after World War I, the black exit from the South continued in unprecedented numbers. This movement is called The Great Migration. Between 1910 and 1930, the black population increased 40 percent in northern cities. In 1910, Detroit had a black population of 6,000. By 1929, it increased by 120,000. In *A Nation Under Our Feet,* Steven Hahn stated that from 1910–1930, two million blacks left the South to migrate to the North or West. In 20 years, from 1900–1920, Chicago grew from 1.7 million to 2.7 million, according to U.S. Census figures. The two Kansas Cities doubled in population from 1920 to 1930 in those same census reports. In *Arc of Justice,* Ohio State history professor, Kevin Boyle, wrote that New York had 91,000 blacks in 1910, and 300,000 by 1925. Detroit, he says, grew from 5,700 to 81,000. However, those figures are only numbers. Boyle opens the *Arc of Justice* with words that depict the harshness of life for black Southerners traveling north during the 1920s—segregated transportation, racial signs that divided blacks and whites in the public arena, and poverty depicted by their clothing and travel accessories.

My parents were among those who moved to the North to seek opportunity and to escape racial discrimination. I do not know, but they could have been on one of those trains that Boyle described in his book. It was the mode of travel. My parents, like millions of others, would have stepped off that train leaving one world and entering another, stepping from the rural South into one of those massive and grand Beaux Arts train stations of the day. For Mom and Dad, it was Kansas City's gleaming Union Station, the second largest train station in the country. Like many who stepped off those trains, Mom and Dad came first and then other family members followed, settling in what was then the fifteenth largest urban center in the country.

The Kansas City my folks found in the Roaring Twenties was full of opportunity; it just was not equal opportunity. In early Kansas City, blacks were confined to living in the west bottoms, the west side, and the downtown area. Charles Coulter described a 1912 housing report, which stated that in the 18th and Vine district, only thirty-six percent of the homes had water; nearly half the families were without sinks; the illiteracy rate was ten times higher than that for white Kansas City residents; and black's death rate was twice as high. Blacks of that early period moved to the North for better jobs, but the jobs they found were mostly unskilled work in service industries. Many black newcomers were excluded from better paying jobs in trade and craft unions. Women did laundry, hair styling, and other domestic work. Janet Bruce wrote that in 1920 less than a quarter of the industries hired blacks at all. One of the better job opportunities available to blacks was that of a Pullman Porter.

For thousands of black workers, the huge K.C. packinghouses and stockyards in the west bottoms were the predominant source of employment. It was bloody, dangerous, and tough work. Melvin Tolson described a summer working there in his well-known "Caviar and Cabbage" column in the *Washington Tribune.* "We worked under miserable conditions. Men stood in water all day. They were always scared of losing their jobs. Most of them bowed under debts," he wrote.

My parents moved north and settled in the Missouri side of Kansas City

within this social and economic backdrop. Yet times were beginning to change. In spite of discrimination in employment and housing, blacks in Kansas City were better off in some ways than those in other Northern cities. My parents were in a community where black entrepreneurship, along with black culture, was developing. Mom ran a dress shop. My dad first worked wherever he could. Eventually he ran the restaurant in the nightclub called the Cherry Blossom, which was not just any restaurant. My parents first lived near the south boundary of what was becoming the Negro Community. In the very heart of it would develop the area that would provide destiny for my life, the infamous Paseo Boulevard and Eighteenth and Vine.

Things were happening at Eighteenth and Vine. Among these were Count Basie, Coleman Hawkins, Rube Foster, J. L Wilkerson, The Paseo Y, the Cherry Blossom, the *KC Call*, the Monarchs, Lincoln High School, and even Tommy Pendergast. All of this was a gathering of new ideas and happenings, which flowed together into one during the Roaring Twenties, just like the joining of the muddy waters of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers in that turn north of town. The effect of these things on my life would be profound, and to know my story you must understand different pieces of its foundation. Let me show you around.

Paseo YMCA: My destiny was cast before my parents arrived in Kansas City. Philanthropist Julius Rosenwald never knew me, or how much he affected my life. Rosenwald offered $25,000 to any group that could raise $75,000 for a black YMCA. The people of Kansas City took him up. Chester Franklin and other black leaders raised $25,000 and the white community in Kansas City raised the other $50,000. The $25,000 was just a modest amount of the $70 million that Rosenwald would donate to charity during his lifetime. It would soon be "worth a million" to a young Billy Myles.

The Y opened in 1914, at 1824 Paseo Boulevard. It was in the most densely populated black neighborhood in Kansas City, just one block around the corner from Eighteenth and Vine. The Y soon became the focal point for the Kansas City black community. It would be my own home away from home, and the place where I would later see a young ballplayer named Jackie Robinson. Imagine the five-story building that $100,000 built in 1914. Its swimming pool and gymnasium became a magnet for thousands of young kids like me, drawing them to a Christian setting, to scouts, and to summer camps. Its spacious lobby was a setting for graduations, rallies, and even musical performances. Meeting rooms provided space for community clubs, organizations, and, before long, the Civil Rights Movement. A cafeteria and top floor sleeping rooms provided lodging for the City's population in need of assistance. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Y provided the only public meeting place for black clubs and groups and the only swimming pool open to blacks. The building became the major social center for blacks in Kansas City. Guess who, in 1922, became its executive director? None other than G. A. Gregg, the same person who went through the Tulsa Riots with my father.

The Call: Kansas City's *The Call* followed the Paseo Y, when Chester Franklin first published the paper on May 6, 1919. It was no easy task. The

local white printers union refused to print it and subscriptions began by word of mouth. Still, the paper soon had one of the largest circulations of any black weekly in the country. To this day, *The Call* arrives each week in my Columbus, Ohio mailbox. Eventually, *The Call* would chronicle my exploits on the gridiron, first as a player and then as a coach. Through the years, *The Call* has been a voice and champion for economic and social justice, and personal responsibility within the black communities of both Kansas Cities.

Rube Foster: Rube Foster was a giant of a man, and that describes him both physically and intellectually. Foster first was a hurler whom Honus Wagner called, "one of the greatest pitchers of all time." But Foster's contribution to baseball was something bigger, "paying forward" for black baseball players of his era and for athletes of the future like me.

Foster was first the player coach of the Chicago American Giants, then the most famous black team in the Midwest. Many Negro teams in the early part of the century were not well funded or well equipped. Not Foster's. His players had clean uniforms, shiny new equipment, and plenty of bats and balls. Foster would rent a Pullman for road games. When the train pulled into town, the big leaguers stepped off that train in the flashiest of suits and top hats. It was quite a sight.

On February 20, 1920, Rube Foster organized a meeting of the owners of black baseball teams from the Midwest. The meeting place? None other than my Paseo YMCA. Foster dreamed of a league for black players equal to the finest of the white baseball leagues. His idea was to develop black baseball so that when integration came, "we would be ready." After several days, that meeting produced a constitution of the National Association of the Colored Baseball Clubs, establishing rules for the western division of the Negro National League (NNL). Upon signing the contract, Foster proclaimed, "We are the ship; all else the sea."

The Negro Leagues would endure until 1960. It proved, as envisioned by Foster, black ballplayers could not only play with whites, but also play superior baseball and draw larger crowds. Unlike the white games at the time, black baseball was a complete game, a speed game—a bunt and run, double steal, hit and run game. Today we would call that "small ball." Then it brought crowds to the stadiums and money to the owner's pockets, both of which the white owners saw. Foster's skills stabilized black baseball. In an era when black players could not sleep in the towns where they played, when they rode a hot and dusty bus, when owners would run out on their contracts and, when restaurants made them eat in the kitchens, Rube Foster brought professionalism, crowds, and steady income. Rube Foster's brainchild brought something even more significant. Negro League teams began playing white clubs in exhibition games after the season. In 1923, the American Giants and the Philadelphia Hilldales played the major leaguers, even up in postseason exhibitions, and Foster's league demonstrated that it could compete with the white clubs. That was enough for Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis, who allegedly said that this would be the "last time a big league club would play blacks while wearing its team uniform." Even though Landis denied the

policy's existence, the unwritten Landis Rule stood for twenty-one years. It was not until after his death in 1944 that things began to change.

On the other hand, Rube Foster did many good things for baseball and set in motion practices that led to integrated play. Moreover, what Foster did for baseball, he also did for me, William Myles II. He assisted in leading me down my own road to athletics. That happened in large part because Foster invited J. L. Wilkinson to the 1920 meeting at the Paseo YMCA.

J. L. Wilkinson: Of the eight owners invited to join the Negro National League, only J. L. Wilkinson was white. Before joining, he was in Des Moines, Iowa, where he played baseball. In 1912 he organized the All Nations Team. Wilkinson's team of blacks, whites, Cubans, Indians, Mexicans, and Asians—plus a woman shortstop for good measure—barnstormed across the Midwest. The carnival show, which traveled in a specially built Pullman Coach, chugged into town and presented the equivalent of a three-ring circus, a ball game, a wrestling match, and a dance. The traveling entertainers drew big crowds, but the team soon earned a reputation for the quality of its baseball.

In 1915, Wilkinson moved the team to Kansas City, positioning it for an invitation to join Foster's new league. Foster wanted to keep the new league black, because in those days the white booking agents had been exploiting black baseball. But he needed Wilkinson, who not only had a team, but also the lease on the Kansas City ballpark. Thus, the Kansas City Monarchs was born. The new team, under Wilkinson, would eventually be called "the New York Yankees of Negro Baseball." The Monarchs would rule black baseball from Kansas City for thirty-five years. Wilkinson brought lights and night baseball to the major league game. Through a depression and a war, he maintained a first-class operation. The Monarchs was a major social institution for the black community of Kansas City. Opening day was a parade. People said it was like Christmas. One had to be there.

Wilkinson's greatest contribution would be earning the respect of all, both black and white, for the way he treated his players. In *Kansas City Monarchs*, Janet Bruce wrote of Newt Allen, who played for Wilkinson. In Bruce's book, located in the *Kansas City Monarchs Oral History Collection*, Allen is reported as saying, " 'He was a considerate man; he understood; he knew people. Your face could be as black as tar; he treated everyone alike.' " Thus, when it was time to integrate the major leagues, who better than Wilkinson to do it? Starting with Jackie Robinson, the Monarchs would send more players to the majors—twenty-seven—than any other black team. "Great! Great! The door is open!" Monarch Manager Buck O'Neil would exclaim when that happened.

Fortunately, the doors that Wilkinson opened for baseball would soon also open for Billy Myles. At the time, I was approaching age eight or nine, discovering sports, and wanting to be an athlete; and there was Wilkinson, bringing Satchel Paige, Hilton Smith, and Jackie Robinson right into my backyard to show me how.

All That Jazz: It was not just baseball that distinguished Kansas City from other cities. In 1919, the Eighteenth Amendment outlawed the manufacture,

sale, and transportation of intoxicating liquors in the United States. Apparently, some believed that the Amendment exempted Kansas City, because business was just fine for the T. J. Pendergast Liquor Distributing Company. In the early part of the 1920s, the Kansas City political boss Tom Pendergast (Boss Tweed) ruled with an iron fist, and controlled city jobs, services, and developments. The bars, gambling dens, and clubs that the Pendergast environment fostered were the perfect incubators for what was to become the infamous Kansas City Jazz. He created a center of commerce and entertainment. It became known as a "Paris of the Plains." Edward Morrow wrote in the *Omaha World-Herald*, "If you want to see some sin, forget Paris and go to Kansas City."

My Dad was in the thick of it. Well, except for the sin part. When Prohibition was repealed in April 1933, the Cherry Blossom opened at 1822 Vine Street. Described as one of the grander clubs in Kansas City, my father ran the restaurant and food service there. In *Kansas City Jazz*, Frank Driggs and Chuck Haddix describe *The Call's* report on Cherry Blossom's opening night. "The [dance] floor is surrounded by chromium posts placed at equal distance with gold laced ropes connecting the posts. The orchestra's stage contained a large Japanese god placed at the rear . . . On the walls are painted pictures of Oriental landscapes." They went on to write that the restaurant overflowed and people waited in a line that stretched down Vine for half a block.

The Blossom quickly became a Mecca for the soon-to-be-famous jazz musicians and their all-night jam sessions. Driggs and Haddix tell of the celebrated Bennie Moten, Count Basie, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, and Mary Lou Williams as all having played there. One of the legendary stories in jazz is K.C.'s own Lester Young's dethroning of the famed saxophonist Coleman Hawkins. This happened at the Blossom. In a celebrated all-night cutting session, Lester Young blew everyone away, including Coleman Hawkins. This event is one of the defining moments in the history of Kansas City Jazz. The story has been told and retold in books and movies by Count Basie, Mary Lou Williams, and even Ken Burns in his well-known documentary. As I listen to the tale, I wonder, *Could Dad have been there*?

The Cherry Blossom was short lived, as the many clubs and musicians of that era came and went, while competing for business. But the music went on. Count Basie, Benny Moten, Mary Lou Williams, Lester Young, Charlie Parker, Andy Kirk, Jay McShann, and others played on to establish Kansas City as a cradle of American Jazz on par with New Orleans, Chicago, and New York. The economic activity and culture created the heart and soul of the black community in which I developed as a young man. Janet Bruce in her book, *The Kansas City Monarchs,* reports Jesse Fisher as saying " 'To come to Kansas City on a Saturday night was just like trying to walk through Harlem when there's a parade. It was really something to see. Everybody who was anybody was at Eighteenth and Vine.' "

Eighteenth & Vine: More than jazz grew out of Eighteenth and Vine. It was also a thriving, self-contained business district in the heart of the black community. Because of segregation, blacks had their own requirements for a comfortable life. Everything was centered there. The famous Streets Hotel

and the more affordable Booker T. Hotel were the main places where blacks could stay in Kansas City. Cab Calloway, Billy Eckstine, Lena Horne, Joe Louis, Satchel Paige, Jackie Robinson, Count Basie, Coleman Young, Charlie Parker, and Mary Lou Williams were just some of the great ones who stayed there when they came to town. The Streets Hotel was the place.

Just around the corner was the Paseo Y and Wheatley Hospital. Matlaw's sold fine men's clothing. Katz Drugs sold prescriptions and sodas. Homer Roberts was the black car dealer, reportedly the only one in the country at the time. The Lincoln building housed doctors, dentists, and attorneys. The Lincoln Theater accommodated 1,500 and did not restrict blacks, as the downtown theaters did. *The Call* offices were there, as were the Monarchs. Of course, there were the black churches. Forty-three different ones were in town at the end of the 1920s, according to Charles Coulter. There were tailors and cobblers, beauticians and bakeries. In short, it had all the services that downtown Kansas City denied its black citizens. Everything was right there, and everyone dressed up in a white shirt, a collar, and a tie to go down there. Eighteenth Street was just the *place* to be.

A Man Without an Education: My parents found one more thing waiting in Kansas City that had been a fixture in their lives and would eventually be central to mine. That was a community that valued education. Two years prior, there had been an assembly to start the 1919 school year at Lincoln High. The *Kansas City Sun* report of the assembly was recounted by Coulter in his book, *Take Up the Black Man's Burden*. Coulter writes how that first day of school was met with excitement. He reports that over 550 students and their parents and friends were greeted at the Lincoln High auditorium by several of the community's most influential blacks, including lawyers, newspaper editors, and even a former Lincoln High principal. The lawyer, William C. Hueston, challenged the students by stating that there was a "contest" going on in our country, and that they, the students, represented our race; and the results of the contest was left to them to decide.

Coulter went on to say that the contest reflects the black community's pursuit of equality. My father was not in the assembly that day, but if he had been, I know what he would have said "A man without an education is headed for a bad situation." This was my father's favorite saying, one that he would drill into me until it eventually governed the man I would become and the life I would live. My parents valued education and they found a community that did, too. It would make all the difference.

All of the aforementioned circumstances and developments describe the Kansas City my parents settled in, and the village that would eventually raise the child, Billy Myles. Except there is one more piece. There was one more move in my parents' lives, and it was perhaps the most important one of all for establishing who I am. There was one more block to be laid in the foundation, before the birth of Billy Myles. That block of stone was stamped "Westport."

Westport: Sometime around 1923, Mom and Dad moved forward in society when they relocated to the Westport community. Westport was founded

in 1831. It is located due south of downtown Kansas City, Missouri, and a mile east of the state line. It became a supply post on the Santa Fe Trail, and a site for slave auctions. John McCoy and John Wornall were the town's founders, most prominent citizens, and slave owners. Yet legend says McCoy established a way for the auctioned slaves to work and be paid, in order to earn their freedom. He reportedly set aside land where former slaves could live. Settlement of that land by free blacks would eventually give rise to a community called Steptoe, the black neighborhood in the middle of Westport. It was there my parents decided to live.

Steptoe was surrounded by the white world of Westport. It was small, maybe four blocks north-south and five blocks east-west, with about one hundred families. Nonetheless, it was an oasis for black Americans who lived there. The neighborhood of neat, wood-frame, clapboard houses with front porches was a place where blacks felt safe and cared for. Parents watched over all the neighborhood children and were involved in their education. It was an island, a safe haven in a still highly segregated and racist society of the 1920s.

My parents likely moved to Steptoe because it was one of the few places where they could live, outside of the main black community. *The Arc of Justice* is Kevin Boyle's riveting book that recounts Ossian Sweet's nationally famous 1925 murder trial in Detroit. Sweet was a black physician who bought a house in the white section of Detroit, and defended himself when a large mob attacked it the second night he lived there. Sweet was the second black who tried to move out of the Detroit ghetto during the summer of 1925. The first was Dr. Alexander Turner, also a physician, whose house was attacked within hours of his moving into it. Under threat of their lives, he and his wife were forced to sign over the deed to the white mob, while the police stood by and did nothing. Even though blacks were welcome to provide the hard labor for the booming factories of the North, they were not yet welcome to live outside of the black neighborhoods. So my folks chose Steptoe, and what a difference that made.

Steptoe was not a wealthy community, but because of its proximity to the wealthy white Westport surrounding it, those living there were afforded better economic opportunities than many blacks living elsewhere. Residents worked as chauffeurs, maids, day laborers, or cooks for the wealthy families on the Plaza to the south. Some were railroad porters while others were plumbers, teachers, and holders of other jobs. By far, though, the biggest employer was the adjacent St. Luke's Hospital, which opened in 1925 and where many of the Steptoe ladies worked in the laundry and later as nurse's aids.

There was something else unique about the community. Not just blacks, but some whites lived in the black core of Steptoe. The surrounding larger Westport community was also a vibrant ethnic mix of Anglo, Jewish, Swedish, Italian, German and Mexican heritage. The relationships were wonderful. For those who would graduate and move away, it would be a shock to find the world unlike the place they left.

For William and Vera Myles, that place was 402 W. 43rd Street, where my parents' Steptoe home was located on one of Kaycee's many hills. The house was just a thousand feet from the Santa Fe Trail and the Boone Trading Post, which is the oldest building standing today in Kansas City. It is a building

where slaves were once auctioned. Yes, Steptoe was rooted in the past, but it was years ahead of other places where my folks might have landed. I was about to land there, too.

While the world would soon be changing, for the time being Kansas City was still stuck in the old ways. Even though my mother could work at St. Luke's Hospital, she could not go there to have a baby. So, in 1936, when the time came for me to enter this world, my parents headed across town to the private Wheatley Hospital for blacks, just around the corner from 18th and Vine. As I previously stated, that was where everything was a-happening. Anyone who was anybody was at Eighteenth and Vine. Little Billy Myles soon would be there, too.

Chapter 4

A PLACE CALLED WESTPORT

The trip to Wheatley Hospital was a long time coming. My parents had been married fifteen-and-a-half years and thought they could not have children. Imagine their surprise when all of a sudden they got an answer to their prayers—Me!

On November 21, 1936, at 9:10 a.m. Central Time, the two most important things in the world were happening. Ohio State was getting ready to play Michigan on homecoming day in the Horseshoe, and Billy Myles was entering this world in Kansas City, Missouri. Just before the fans were sliding into their seats in Ohio Stadium, I came sliding into this world at Wheatley Hospital. All eight pounds, two ounces of me. When they kicked off, I was kicking and screaming right with them. The Buckeyes won that day, 21-0. We were whipping that school right from the start. Right out of the womb and we put a shutout on them, 21-0. Not only did we shut them out, that school up north never crossed the fifty-yard line that day. I like to joke that there were two Buckeye milestones that day. Ohio State played its 400th football game and Billy Myles was born destined to become a Buckeye. That was the day it started. From there, I just got on the bus and took the ride.

That win over Michigan was the third in a row for Francis Schmidt. Three years earlier on March 2, 1934, Schmidt had been named the new Ohio State football coach and he had responded to a reporter's question about Michigan with the reply, "How about Michigan? They put their pants on one leg at a time, same as we do." Thus began the tradition of awarding players and staff Gold Pants for a win over Michigan. As Ohio State earned its third pair in a row that day, little did I know that I would go on later in life to win four pairs of those treasured Gold Pants myself. What an omen of things to come.

At that time in history, it was common to give birth to babies at home, but since Mother was thirty-six when she gave birth to me, I was born in the hospital. With John and Phillip, though, Mom invited a lady in the neighborhood to our house to help with the home delivery of my two brothers. John Michael followed me, on March 2, 1939, and Phillip Henry was born on December 11, 1941—four days after Pearl Harbor. Being five years old, I do not remember Pearl Harbor, but I do remember my Father coming into the dining room and saying, "You have a baby brother named Phil."

We lived in Westport, which is near the fabulous Country Club Plaza of Kansas City. Patterned after Seville, Spain, the Plaza is reportedly the oldest shopping center in the country, attracting ten million tourists each year. It is all Spanish stucco. People come from all over the world at Christmas time to see it light up. The rest of the blacks who lived elsewhere would say we

lived in Westport. It was just another name for a section of Kansas City to them. But to us, Westport meant the old section called Steptoe that has been discussed.

I have mentioned St. Luke's Hospital. It was just a few blocks from our house and the all-white hospital when I was growing up. Of course, no one in our family could go there for care, even though it was close to us. I did go there to pick up my father's paycheck, because his house and window cleaning business would clean parts of the hospital, but that was the closest I came to St. Luke's. Instead, when we had to go to the hospital, we went to Wheatley Hospital where I was born, or General Hospital. All the hospitals were segregated at that time. Kansas City had two General Hospitals. General Number One was for the whites. Guess who was designated for General Number Two?

Born in 1936, I was a child of the Depression; but my parents never talked about that. They were positive people. Their mantra was "do not feel sorry for yourself, get up and get it done." I am sure they struggled in my early years, but I was too young to notice and they never talked about it. Still, one does wonder how different my life might have been if I had been born in Oklahoma, in the heart of the dust bowl in 1936, instead of in Kansas City? Had I not been in Kansas City, which was then thriving under the Pendergast machine, would I have been one of the "Okies" that John Steinbeck wrote of in the *Grapes of Wrath*? Would my family have been among that fifteen percent of the Oklahoma population that left the state on Route 66 for California? Or was *place* at work when God dropped Billy Myles into Kansas City?

Mom and Dad: These things and places that I just described provided a multitude of advantages that shaped the person I would become. In addition, I had something else even greater, and that was the advantage of two wonderful parents—progressive, hard working people who loved and inspired their sons.

To my mother, the most important things in the world were her three boys. Mother was a Baptist; and when I was a boy we went to Paseo Baptist. My mother was very intelligent, and she was regarded as the educated woman in her family. Since Mom's family followed Mom and Dad to Kansas City, she was the one all the older brothers came to when they wanted to find out how to do different things, to get advice about financial matters, and inquire about other issues. Mom had taught first grade back in Texas before she and Dad married. She was also an entrepreneur and, as stated earlier, she had a dress shop before I was born. She helped my father as a driving force in the Myles Family catering and window washing business. Mom was also in the healing practice of Christian Science for twenty-six years.

Many people respected her, and she was well known in K.C. Mom was such an extraordinary woman for her time that when she died in 1975, the mayor of Kansas City issued a proclamation. The mayor's statement captures her essence a bit. Following is a short excerpt from the proclamation:

> . . . her remarkable life constitutes an outstanding and convincing demonstration of the enormous accomplishments which can be made through determination, dedication, hard work, sacrifice, and love . . .

Jesus's two great commandments describe the way Vera Myles lived the life the mayor described. According to Mark 12:30–31, we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and love our neighbor as ourselves. Mom obeyed the scripture. This generous, patient, kind, and fearless woman spent a lot of time studying the Bible, which prepared her to pray with others when they asked. Whatever problem people brought to Mom, she turned them to God for answers.

My parents taught me that there are no limits. They encouraged me to dream big. They instilled in me the idea that there is nothing to fear if I am doing what is right because God is with me. Their advice was to live a good life, be honest, generous, and selfless. Love. Serve others.

My aspirations to be something in life came from both my parents, but my father was the one who stressed the importance of success by his constant reminder that "You are a Myles." My Dad was the only man that my brothers and I had for guidance, because his brothers had died. Since my father never saw his own father after he was eight or nine, Dad felt that it was important for him to be there for us. He always said, "You're a Myles. Myles don't do that. Myles do this." I think of kids today, growing up without fathers, and how tough that is. Dad's background makes it even more remarkable that he turned out to be a great family man with outstanding accomplishments. I think how difficult it is for kids, who are raised without a father today or raised on the streets, to take the route of my father in their later lives. I wonder what I would have become if my own father had neglected me because he had been raised without a father for most of his young life?

For a time, Dad worked at the Federal Court Building downtown. When I was old enough to get on the streetcar by myself, I would ride there to see him. Later, my folks started the house cleaning, window washing, and catering service. Dad was always doing something. Dad had about twenty-five men who were coming to the house to get their assignments. Dad charged maybe a nickel to clean an ordinary window.

Like most kids, I only remember snippets of my early life, before kindergarten. We did not have kindergarten in Westport, so in 1941, I went across town to Wendell Phillips. Wendell Phillips was in the major black neighborhood, at 24th and Vine, five or six blocks from Lincoln High School. That was about five miles from our house, and Mother drove us there in our '35 Dodge. Of course, like most black schools of the day, it was named for a famous person—in this case, Wendell Phillips, the wealthy white Bostonian and Harvard Law School graduate. In 1835, Phillips had witnessed the attempted lynching of William Garrison as he spoke against the wrongs of slavery. That so affected Phillips that he abandoned his law practice to become a leading voice—"the Golden Trumpet"—of the Abolitionist Movement, a conversion that so shocked his family they tried to commit him to an insane asylum. Phillips became such a famous abolitionist that our school was named after him.

Penn School: In 1942, I started first grade at Penn Elementary School, a two-room school in Westport. Even though it was only two rooms, Penn School was famous—and not because Billy Myles went there. Penn School was established in 1868 as the first school west of the Mississippi for black

children. Mrs. Sam Ellis, wife of a retired capitalist, decided to teach the black children in Westport Township because the children had no school to attend. The school was named for William Penn, the Quaker who founded the state of Pennsylvania. When I attended Penn, the toilets were so old that the seats sat up in the air. When you sat down on one, the seat went down, and when you got up, they flushed automatically.

The school served approximately one hundred black families in our Westport neighborhood. There were eight or nine students in my brother's class, but only four in my class—Charles Beamon, Gladys James, Geneva Hayes, and Billy Myles. Geneva left in the fifth grade and Augustus Walker replaced her. How many people can still remember everyone in his or her first grade class? We four sat in one row, while the grade ahead of us had two rows. One thing is for certain, with just four of us, I certainly could not go home and brag to Mom and Dad that I had finished fourth in my class! As early as grade school, my Dad was always stressing, "A man without an education is headed for a bad situation."

Big things came out of this small school. I cannot remember all names, but I do remember that Penn School produced a graduate who started the reading program in St. Louis. Another male graduate of my school started the kindergarten in Missouri, a program for all students—black and white. Penn students grew up to be doctors, lawyers, ministers, architects, teachers, and musicians. People who were successful in many occupations started their education in this two-room school, a legacy of Mrs. Ellis and proof of her conviction that all children deserve an education.

When I entered the fourth grade, the school was expanded to three rooms. The fourth and fifth grades were in one room and sixth and seventh in the other. That year my brother John entered school. John did not go to kindergarten. When John entered the first grade, they had him in the first grade for half a day and then they moved him to the second grade. He was in the second grade for two weeks, and they moved him to the third grade. They were getting ready to move John to the fourth grade when Mom said, "Hey, STOP. Billy is there." I said, "Thanks, Mom. I've been going to school for four years, and this guy is going to catch up with me in one month!" John was that talented.

At Penn School, we played softball, dodge ball, and kickball at recess. As a result of these games, I began to acquire athletic interest and talent. I had decided early in elementary school that I wanted to be a football player. I would ask high school students if they were on the football team. If they were not on the team, I did not think much of them. I did not know much about football. I actually thought that I would start as a fullback, and if I got hurt, I would be a halfback, and if I got hurt again, I would be a quarterback. That is how I had it figured out.

At that time, each elementary school in Kansas City elected a mayor; and when I was in the sixth and seventh grade, I was elected mayor of Penn School. We would get to go down to City Hall. You might say I was a leader even back then; but remember, in my class Charles sat in the first seat, Gladys in the second seat, I was in the third, and Augustus sat behind me. The four

of us constituted the entire class, so it was not as though I won a big election to become mayor.

The Boogie-Woogie: When we were young, my father was a Scout Master of Troop 190, and his scouts would sometimes come to our house. One evening in 1943, Dad decided that he could leave us with the scouts while he and Mother went to the grocery store. They left the scouts at our house to watch my brothers and me while they were gone. The scouts played "boogie-woogie" tunes on our upright piano. Now, boogie-woogie is the style of piano-based blues, which was popular during the '30s and '40s. It originated in Texas in the late 1800s and emerged with the Jazz movement during the Roaring Twenties. It grew in the '30s and was all the rage when Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller adapted it to their big-band sounds at the start of World War II. This was the hip music of our day, and the scouts were playing it while they were watching us. Soon brother John got up and started playing with them.

When my folks came back from their shopping trip to Milgram's grocery store, there was John, at age four, playing what the scouts had played. He was sitting there at our piano playing—by ear no less—boogie-woogie. If you know anything about music, you know boogie-woogie is pretty uptempo, and there sat this four-year-old boy pounding away, playing by ear. He had just picked it up.

Mom and Dad were shocked! Two weeks later, they took John out to the conservatory of music and, naturally, I had to go. John asked the people to play something, and they played it. Then John played it. They played something else. Then John would play that. So it went. The conservatory gave John a test. They sent him into another room, and when they would hit a note, John could tell them what the note was. This was at age four, I remind you. It turned out that John was a child prodigy.

Of course, my parents decided, "If John can play that well without any lessons, then we had better give him lessons." Naturally, that also meant, "Billy had to take piano lessons, too." Now, Billy was not sitting there at the piano playing boogie-woogie, but thanks to John, Billy was soon trying to take piano lessons.

At the same time that John was effortlessly pounding out the boogie-woogie, I was struggling with my own music. You know how they say blacks have rhythm? Well, I had no rhythm. Not one bit. I had no rhythm, and my little brother was a child prodigy. Billy Myles's piano lessons lasted about six months before everyone gave up on me.

My mother played the piano and my father the violin, so I went from the piano lessons to violin lessons. We had a violin, and when the piano did not work, they thought, "We'll let him try the violin." Of course, Dad had a name made up for us by now—the three Ms, which stood for Myles Melody Makers.

So there I was taking violin lessons. Then I quit. The violin was making my skin crawl. When I hit the wrong notes, my skin would crawl because I squeaked so badly. Not only did I quit, but I sold the violin. I just sold it. It was gone, and I was not able to get it back. That was not a good thing, because did I mention that this violin was actually my father's prize violin? My father

whipped me good. He did not slug me, but he whipped me good. I never in my life sold another violin.

When he was six years old, John gave a recital at Saint James Baptist Church, where he played Bach and Mozart with no music at all in front of him. When he was nine, my father took him to New York and John gave a recital at Carnegie Hall on the piano, organ, and accordion. All that at nine years old. Yet, I had no rhythm. You might think this was the end of my music making, but unfortunately, there is more. I will save that for later.

On The Road: I knew how much my parents did for me at a very early age. We got to do things that other children did not get to do. My parents were not partiers. They saved money, and we went on vacations. My folks had a 1935 Dodge four-door sedan, and we would take long trips. It was an interesting and wonderful childhood. Now, we did not stay in hotels. I do not think I stayed in a hotel until I was in high school, when I traveled with the football and basketball teams. That is not because we could not afford to, but because hotels did not welcome us. Therefore, like many black families of that era, we went to places where we could stay with relatives. We would go to Texas, Oklahoma, Denver, Chicago, and other places where we had friends or relatives. We got to see circuses, hear classical music, and see the great entertainers. Some of the other kids in my neighborhood—and my neighborhood was by no means a place where people did not do for their kids—did not do what we did. I think it was because my parents were older and they had that plan. They were going to work that plan whether we wanted to or not.

When we traveled, we carried our food in shoeboxes. We would have fried chicken, cake, and those kinds of food. All the black people who traveled on trains in those days had a shoebox with their lunch, because we could not eat in the train's diner in those days and we certainly could not eat in restaurants. Even though we could not stay or eat at some places, we never saw it as a problem and we never heard our parents complain. I guess they shielded us. Being positive people, they always looked at how to make the best of things.

Street Lights: My father had a rule. "When the street lights come on, you gotta be at home." He was a man that whistled. Other people would holler; my Dad would whistle. Everybody in our neighborhood was called Junior, except me. I was Billy. Dad said, "If you're at bat, Billy, and I'm calling you, when I whistle, first base is our front porch." That was another favorite saying. I would look at other kids. Their folks would call them; yet, they would stay down there another fifteen minutes or half an hour. Not me. That did not happen with the Myles boys.

I had a bicycle. It was a Firestone Flying Ace with the big balloon tires, one gear, and a coaster brake. I would ride all around, down to the Plaza, and all over. Kids today cannot do that—but back then, we rode all over on our own. Things were close, so a bicycle provided freedom that kids today do not have. Still, when Dad would whistle, it was time to come home. I could generally hear him about four blocks away. Even if we were quite a ways from home, everybody knew Dad's whistle. It traveled like the grapevine from block to block. People would say, "Your daddy's been callin'."

I would say, "How long ago?"

If they said, "He just whistled," I said okay and whoosh, I was home.

If they said, "Oh, about half an hour ago," then I would say, "Oh, shoot. He's gonna kill me!" Then I would think, "Oh, well, I might as well enjoy myself. I'm already in trouble, so I'm not in any hurry to go home now."

The Boxer: Dad bought us memberships at the Paseo YMCA when we were very young. At the Y, I met and mingled with other black kids from the other black neighborhoods that were located farther away from Westport. At the same time, I was getting to be one of the strong boys in my own neighborhood. We would go down to the Y at nine o'clock on Saturday morning and we would usually be through around one o'clock. John and the other guys from my neighborhood would go home on the streetcar or the bus. However, I would go over to Gateway Boxing Club, where I found that boxing was something I liked.

I became interested in boxing because I was seeing famous people. I saw Major Jones, Jackie Darthard, Roy Miller, and Lullaby Levi Southall. I saw them all down at Bubbles Klice's pro gym over Crown Drugstore at Eighteenth and Vine, where his professional men trained. I also saw them at Parade Park. Everybody was there—you could rub elbows with all these celebrities. The Gateway Boxing Club had these little fights. We were less than flyweights. We were paperweights, fighting at ninety-five pounds. We were getting in these fights, and Joe Louis was big at this time, so naturally I wanted to be like Joe. Joe Louis was everyone's hero.

The first time I boxed over there I got home around nine o'clock Saturday night. I was only eight or nine years old, so naturally my folks were worried and wanted to know where I had been all day. I told them I had been boxing and how exciting it was. However, my folks thought differently and did not like my boxing.

The Gateway Boxing Club was another one of the places I sought. The Gateway was founded in 1936 by Bubbles Klice. It was originally located at Eighteenth and Tracy, but it had moved over to 22nd and Tracy by the time I started going. Known as "Mr. Boxer" in his prime, Bubbles was a small man with a big heart. He developed some of the best amateur boxers in the world. By the time I started boxing, Bubbles had become a legend. Bubbles also coached professional boxers, and once traveled with the legendary Jack Johnson, the first black heavyweight champion. In 1951, Bubbles quit professional boxing after Jackie Darthard, one of his boxers, died as the result of a brain embolism suffered in the ring.

The Gateway was the place to be if you wanted to train with the best. Bubbles knew boxing; he knew talent, and he was admired worldwide. The Gateway produced 130 regional champions and 11 national champions. In 1982, Bubbles received the Golden Gloves Hall of Fame boxing award.

Bubbles was more than a boxer. He served as a mentor to many young black men in the days of segregation. During those times, a black kid who was growing up had few choices if he could not hit a ball, run fast, or play in the Negro Baseball Leagues. For those kids and others less fortunate, the Gateway provided an alternative to the streets. Kids found in Bubbles someone who

cared and looked out for them, someone who would teach them to do the right things. He taught kids the lessons of life, what it took to earn respect and be successful. If his kids got in trouble, Bubbles would bail them out of jail, find them a job, and do the things needed to get them on the straight and narrow. He had a way of turning lives around; and he turned a lot around in his long life. Bubbles was ninety-eight when he passed in 2006.

Bubbles also taught kids how to protect and defend themselves. My friend Ollie Gates, famed Kansas City businessman, philanthropist, and BBQer extraordinaire, has talked about that. People used to pick on Ollie as a kid because he had light skin. Ollie once told me, "Everybody had to know Bubbles in their lifetime." Ollie has talked about how Bubbles was a mentor for so many black boys. In a 2008 *Call* article, Ollie said:

> "Everyone took self-defense and Bubbles Klice was 'the man'. . . . We didn't have too many things to look at that time in the world with things being segregated. But, Bubbles was one of them. Bubbles was a correct people person. He wasn't a run-of-the-mill people person. . . . He was a person that said you're going to do things the right way, the correct way. . . . I can remember him saying when I got to the gym, 'come on in, boy, you can do it!' That is what he said to all of us."

I was fortunate to have my parents guiding me, so I did not need Bubbles as a mentor. But I did need the Gateway and the introduction to boxing that it provided. Boxing fascinated me. Boxing made me tough, made me competitive, and it taught me to take care of myself—qualities that I would need later to break the barriers of my times and to compete in the sport of football, which was my life's pursuit. The Gateway was one of the places that started me down that road.

I remember one time sitting on our front porch, while holding my jaw. A young man had hit me there. There were four of them, and I was with two of my buddies. Of course, my two buddies had hauled off and fled, leaving me behind. Dad said, "Hey toughie, he got you didn't he?" As I sat there nursing that jaw, I thought about the basketball game happening that night. At first I was not going to go, but the group that had beat up on me would be there. Therefore, I went down and got them back. I got a stick and hit one of them, but I did not catch the other one until later that summer. I was playing ball, and when I saw him in the stands I thought, *I hope he is still here when the game is over.* He was. After the game, I just ran over and started punching him. He screamed, "What the heck?"

I told him, "Remember the time you hit me in the jaw? Well, I don't forget." I never went out of my way to hurt someone again. I never started it. But if they came after me, I did a few things to demonstrate that I would not tolerate abuse, and people stopped bothering me. That was toughness. It was something I would need later when I went to work for Wayne Woodrow Hayes. I was a football player and a boxer; but my mother and father did not like it. I think that most mothers do not want their kids to box. I suppose my parents thought I would become punch drunk. They kept telling me that I would get cauliflower ears.

Boxing matches were on Wednesday nights, the same night my folks were gone. Wednesday was church night, and Mom and Dad went across town to church. In an era when everyone looked out for each other's kids, we were free to roam. The guys and girls in the neighborhood said, "Well, it must be Wednesday night, 'cause Billy, John, and Phil are out after dark." We knew church lasted from eight to nine, and it was going take my parents about twenty minutes to drive home. You would see us out, but when the streetlights went on, I would start backing away from the crowd. I knew Mom and Dad would be home soon, and I had better be there, too. However, after I became a boxer, when they went to church, I would go over to the Gateway instead. I was not too bad. I would win these boxing matches, and then sell my medals for a nickel or dime to the other guys.

One day, someone told my mother about that. Actually, they congratulated her. "Billy's really doing a good job over there fighting, Mrs. Myles," someone said to her. Well, what was supposed to be a compliment about me was news to Mom.

Of course, Mom asked me, "Billy, are you boxing?"

"Yeah, I wanna be Joe Louis," I answered.

That was the wrong thing to say to my mother. Mom told me I could not box. Ironically, that decision really helped me, because she compromised by agreeing to football instead of boxing; although Mom did not want me to play football, either. Athletes were breaking their collarbones at that time. The shoulder pads and other equipment were not very good. Mom had heard about that. She compromised and said that I could not box, but I could play football. I wonder how my life might have been different if I had not taken up boxing? Would Mom have ever let me play football? *The place you seek is seeking you.*

Mom did not have to put an end to my boxing because something else did. Two fighters I especially remember are Major Jones and Jackie Darthard. They were only four or five years older than I was, but they were already professionals. Then Bert Lytell pummeled Jackie in the ring up in Minneapolis, and ten days later, on April 22, 1948, Jackie died of a brain hemorrhage. That definitely put an end to my boxing!

Even though I could not box anymore, my parents would let me go to the fights. Otis Stephenson who lived across the street would take me. I would save up a dollar and a quarter to go see these fighters, the pros. Fights were every Tuesday night. I always had a dollar, but I usually had trouble getting that last quarter.

Joe Louis was there one night to fight an exhibition. He fought an opponent by the name Curt Kennedy. Kennedy got in there and tried to stick Joe real good, and Joe just backed off and knocked him out right there, because it was just an exhibition bout. Joe Louis was "the guy." Can you imagine what it was like to be a kid and see him in person on the streets of Kansas City, to see him at Eighteenth & Vine? I will tell you about that in a bit.

The Skater: Penn School was so small it did not have a wood shop. Therefore, when I was a little older, during sixth and seventh grade, the boys went to Douglass School for industrial arts. We went one day a week for half a

day. Since there were only four in our class, I actually got to go three years—fifth through seventh grade. The Penn School building we were going to was seventy-seven years old. Compared to that, Douglass was just a baby. That building was only fifty-five years old. "Separate but equal" was the motto in those days. We had to leave Penn and go across town to Douglass Elementary at 27th and Jarboe Streets, an area known as the West Side, to get to shop class. Douglass was another black school and, of course, was named after Frederick Douglass, the escaped slave who became an abolitionist, writer, orator, and statesman. We had to take a bus over and bus back. Of course, there was no school bus. We rode on the public transit. Moreover, there was no chaperone with us, as there would be today.

The Douglass kids would pick on kids from Westport. They believed that we, the Westport kids, thought that we were better than they were. Most of us had parents a little older. People in Westport had a steady income. Moreover, living close to the Country Club Plaza probably reinforced the misconception about us. We did not have many tough kids in Westport, so they picked on us; and some of the kids from Westport paid protection fees. Not me. That was when my boxing skills helped, and I began to develop toughness.

The Puddle: When we went to Douglass, I was the leader of this little gang of sixth and seventh graders who followed me to the bus stops. We were walking back from there one day in the winter, and we walked across the frozen Penn Valley Lake in Penn Valley Park, not far from the Union Station. Of course, I was the leader because I was the big one. I did what all kids do. I walked across the lake and the others followed. All of us walked right straight across that frozen lake, which was deeper than I was tall, and we all got off okay. Then I went back out and began showing off for them, pretending I was an Olympic ice skater, minus the skates of course. After all, I was a seventh grader.

I was skating, doing spins and turns, being a show-off for the younger kids and my brother John, when—crack! Like the sound of a rifle shot, the ice broke beneath me. I went under. Completely! I was fortunate to come up through the same hole. I fought and fought and more ice would break. I would get my leg up on it, and then more ice would break again. John, Paul Talley, Charles Beamon, and all my friends were there. I would put my leg up on the ice and try to pull myself out, but more and more ice would break. Finally, somehow I was able to pull myself up on the ice where it was strong enough that I could crawl off.

Of course, it was about two miles to home, too far to walk in that condition, so we headed to the bus stop. When we stepped on the public bus to go home, I had icicles hanging from my ears. I was shivering and shaking. My body was quivering. My lips were blue. People were looking at me and thinking, *What happened to him?*

Before we got off the bus, I told John, "Now don't tell Mom what happened. If she asks, tell her I fell in a puddle."

When I got home, of course the first thing Mom asked was, "What happened?"

"I fell in a puddle on the sidewalk," I answered.

I do not know whether my folks believed me or not. Surely, Mom did not. Because of my condition, she could not have believed my story. Mom never said a word. She was probably too worried about me. My parents put me in warm water, which made sense to me. I know now they should have warmed me slowly with a blanket or sleeping bag, not hot external heat sources or hot water, so that the core temperature comes up. Shucks, I was already cold and this was 1949. They were just glad I was alive. Billy Myles had an angel watching over him that day.

The Protectionist: In 1949, I left Penn School and moved up to the eighth grade at R. T. Coles School at 19th and Tracy, near the Paseo Y and the Eighteenth and Vine area. Because the Penn School Building was built in 1869, R. T. Coles was modern, by comparison, in that it was constructed in 1890. I had moved up, from a 77-year-old building to one that was only fifty-nine years old. Once again, "separate but equal" was at work. On top of that, R. T. Coles was recycled, having previously been the old Lincoln High. It had been converted to a trade school in 1936, the year I was born and when the new Lincoln High was opened; but eighth graders also went there.

R. T. Coles was named after a famous black Kansas City educator, who was originally from Ohio. After high school, Coles enrolled at Hampton Institute in Virginia. There, he took classes beneath "the Emancipation Oak," the site where in 1861 Mary Peake had held class for twenty students in violation of the Virginia law that "[forbade] the education of slaves, free blacks and mulattos." The Emancipation Oak still stands today, a symbol of education for all. Coles graduated with honors from Hampton, along with one of his classmates who also took classes in the shelter of that oak. That was none other than the founder of Tuskegee Institute, Booker T. Washington. Coles brought the Hampton and Booker T. Washington philosophy of a trade school education to Kansas City, and he established the first vocational training programs in Kansas City. Consequently, the vocational high school was named in his honor upon his death.

When I got to Coles, coming from the small and tight-knit Westport, it was a change. I found out that some of my classmates wanted me to pay "protection fees." A student in my eighth grade class told me he wanted a quarter a week from me *for protection.*

"Nobody has bothered me yet, but I'll let you know if they do," I told him.

Nevertheless, this guy kept pestering me. He was in my class, but he was seventeen years old, if that tells you something. I was only twelve, going on thirteen, and I tried to ignore him, but he would not leave me alone. After he kept this up for a while, I finally said to him, "Oh, man, why don't you just leave me alone?"

"No," He said, "I'll protect you from other people." He just kept after me.

One day I finally said, "Well, just meet me downstairs in the restroom after class. Meet me when class is over." After class, he and I went down to the restroom. Of course, some of my classmates followed, and we had ourselves a little fight. I knocked him over into the urinal, and when we came out of that bathroom, he was paying *me* a quarter a week.

Now a quarter a week was big money then. It would buy a lot for a kid

in the late forties. Until you were twelve years old, it only cost you a nickel to ride the bus. It cost fourteen cents to go to the movies. A quarter was big money, and there I was being paid *a quarter a week* for my "protection" business. This went on for a while, and my father would ask me periodically, "Do you need lunch money?"

"No, Dad, I don't need any money."

One day, when I again said no, Dad finally asked, "How are you getting money?"

I was dumb. I told him. "There is this guy giving me a quarter every week," I said.

He asked, "A quarter? What are you doing for a quarter?"

I told Dad, "I protect this guy."

"Protect this guy?" Dad thundered. "What am I raising here, some kind of hoodlum or something?" So ended my short career as a protectionist.

Finding My Way: After the earlier violin episode, John and I decided that I had to be a musician of some kind, so I made another run at it. Dad had built one long room for us boys upstairs in the attic. It went the length of our house. We slept up there and it was our place to hang out. We were up there one day, looking through our things, and we were drawn attention to our many musical records. My folks liked music, and I was always listening to Cherry Berry Bin, Louis Armstrong, and other well-known artists. That particular day, I was listening to Harry James, and I decided I wanted the trumpet, because the trumpet is the loudest thing in the band. Thus, I got a trumpet. I thought I became pretty good on that trumpet. As a seventh grader, still at Penn School, I thought I could really blow. I was the first trumpet of all players in the black grade schools in Kansas City.

Then, as I stated earlier, I left Penn School for junior high at R.T. Coles School and the eighth grade. I should have quit while I was ahead. I was an eighth grader, and one day I was playing something when my brother John says, "That's wrong. You're playing it wrong."

I figured it was wrong, but I blew it again. It was all I knew.

He said, "It's wrong."

I blew it a third time. He said, "That's wrong, too."

I said, "Well, if it is so wrong, why don't you blow it?" John picked that trumpet up and started blowing notes that I could not even begin to blow—triple tonguing and all. I could not begin to blow that, and the year before I had been the first trumpet of all the black grade schools in all of Kansas City. John did that with my trumpet. He just picked it up. He blew the trumpet and he blew me away.

The next fall was my freshman year. While I was playing football, Dad took brothers John and Phil to New York. At age nine, John gave a piano, accordion, and organ recital in Carnegie Hall. When John came back from that recital at Carnegie Hall, they could not do enough for him at the Kansas City Conservatory of Music. It was recommended that he go to the University of Missouri at Kansas City. At the time, the University wasn't accepting any blacks. John was the first black student, as well as the youngest to

be accepted at the University. At age nine, John Michael Myles was studying under a Russian music professor.

The Navy Band sometimes played at the White House. As part of the Navy Band, John would later play for two U. S. presidents. It was interesting to hear John talk about the differences between the two presidents. John said that President Kennedy danced with his wife and maybe one or two other ladies, whose husbands were the honored guests. President Johnson, on the other hand, danced with every woman in the ballroom. With Lyndon Johnson, John could not make the pieces very long. They all needed to be thirty or forty seconds, so that the president could change partners. John said if you got loose and played each piece for three or four minutes, you were going to be there all night.

John would later become one of the lead arrangers for the *Fifth Dimension.* He was that talented. As for me, well I would soon trade the trumpet for a football. Really, music held no future for me ever since they told me in grade school choir, "Just work your mouth, don't let a sound come out." I was always off tune, I did not have any rhythm, and the thing that truly interested me was sports.

John and I had differences, beyond just our musical talents. John always wanted to spend money, whereas I was the cheap one. The first bike I had was a hand-me-down. Then I got a new Firestone Flying Ace from Western Auto, which at the time cost about forty dollars. Because John played a recital, he could afford to buy a much fancier Schwinn. His bike cost probably eighty bucks, twice the cost of mine; but he bought it out of his recital earnings, even though he was only six or seven years old. In college, John would order a '57 Chevy with a Corvette engine in it. It was made especially for John. That car would be worth a ton today. Me, I just drove my parents' cars. It was not that I was treated any differently; I just did not want all the things that my brothers wanted. John would get suits and bell-bottoms, but all Billy Myles ever wanted was overalls and to play ball.

I found ballgames at the Paseo YMCA, where I met two great men who became very influential in my life. Coach Isaiah Banks coached football and taught gym, while Coach Jim Wilkerson coached basketball. They also led activities at the Paseo Y, and it was there that my introduction to the wonderful world of athletics began.

I first tried to go out for football as an eighth grader at Coles, but Coach Banks would not let me. Coles was both a junior high school and a vocational high school. If I had been willing to say I was going to stay for grades nine through twelve and take a vocation—brick masonry, shoe repair, or another trade—Coach would have let me play with the freshman team as an eighth grader. They were not supposed to, but my buddy Leroy Williams did that. You had to be pretty tough to do that, because you would be cannon fodder for the seniors. Nonetheless, I thought I was tough enough to do that and I wanted to play football so much I could taste it.

Still, I could not honestly say that I would stay at R. T. Coles. I would be going on to Lincoln High, the black academic high school up on the hill. Lincoln was R.T. Coles' competition. We had to go to one of those two schools, and since I said I was going to Lincoln, Mr. Banks was not about to give

his rivals an edge. With only two schools playing for the Kansas City Black Championship, why would he break the rules to groom an eighth grader for his competition? There I was in the eighth grade, not yet able to play football. Consequently, my sports at that particular time were swimming, baseball, and boxing. Who was the greatest boxer of them all? Let me tell you.

Chapter 5

HEROES

All children grow up with heroes in their formative years—people they want to emulate, to be like, people who give them a vision of someone that they can be when they grow up. If you are lucky, they provide a positive role model; and if not, well, that too casts your fate in life. I too had heroes, and at eight, nine, ten years old, these were the people I looked up to. It all started with the Brown Bomber.

Joe Louis: Joe Louis won the World Heavyweight Championship on June 22, 1937. It was long before Jackie Robinson ever went to the majors, but after Jesse Owens had won the Olympics in 1936. Jesse was first, Joe second, and Jackie third. We called them "The Big Three," and they represented the three biggest athletic heroes to black Americans of my generation.

I was only seven months old the night Joe first won the title, but I have read of that being a defining moment in black history, and read how blacks across the country stayed up all night in celebration. In *Autobiography: The Collected Works of Langston Hughes, Volume 14*, noted author Langston Hughes described Joe Louis's impact by stating that thousands of blacks would cheer in the streets after every one of Joe's wins; no other individual in America had that effect on the black community's emotions.

Joe had that effect on all of us. A young kid looking for a black hero found one in Joe Louis. Not only was Joe a champion, but like Jesse Owens, Joe Louis was competing in the white man's sport. It was another one of the big first steps on the ladder of integration. The Brown Bomber was *The Guy.* I mean his championship reign lasted more than eleven straight years! I was only seven months when Joe won his first championship, and I would be nearly twelve years old before he was again beaten. Between 1937 and 1948, Joe made twenty-five defenses of his heavyweight title. He knocked out twenty-three opponents in twenty-seven title fights. Five of those knocked out were world champions. In my formative years, there was Joe, not only winning championships, but beating the white man in a white man's sport. What boy that age is not smitten by a hero like that? That is why Joe Louis was the first black hero in this country.

The whole community gathered around Joe. Everyone talked about him. It was usually summertime when Joe was fighting, so you did not have to be at home to hear the radio broadcasts. You could just walk down the street and listen. People sat on their porches then. We do not sit on our porches now, because we have air conditioning. At that time, it was stifling hot and sultry, and people sat on their front porches with the windows open long after the

sun went down, waiting for their houses to cool off. Everybody would sit on their front porches in the evenings because they did not have TVs. My folks used to talk to the neighbors on this side of the porch, and then to the people on the other side. It was so hot they had to be outside and their radios were out there with them. They would talk and listen to Joe fight. You could walk down any street in Steptoe and hear those radios.

Joe Louis was one reason I liked boxing. As a kid, I could see my hero in person. During segregation, even the great Joe Louis, the biggest professional fighter in the world, could not stay in downtown Kansas City. Joe had to stay at the Streets Hotel, the best place in town he was allowed. Thus, when we kids went down to Eighteenth and Vine, there would be Joe Louis, bigger than life.

I would see Joe in our neighborhood; see him on my street, even. Joe came around to Westport because he had a cousin out there named Ersel Locke. One time, we saw Joe walking up the street across from my house, climbing up the hill to see Ersel. Now, Ersel was about seven or eight years older than me, and naturally all us kids jumped in line, and we all followed Joe Louis up that hill like he was a Pied Piper. Can you picture being a young kid and following the great Joe Louis down the street? By that time, he had been the undefeated heavyweight champion for several years. Anyway, Ersel had gotten his jaw broken in some kind of fight the day before. When Joe got there, with all us kids in tow, there sat Ersel on his front porch nursing his broken jaw. I remember the great Joe Louis saying to him, "Ersel, part of the game is duckin'!" Part of the game is duckin'! To this day, I can close my eyes and see the great Joe Louis telling that to Ersel Locke. Ersel never lived that down.

As a little boy, you like people who are tough, who are physical; you admire those kinds of traits. Joe was that person, yet he had the image that blacks as well as whites could be proud of. He loved his mother and treated her like a queen. After every fight, Joe would say, "Just another lucky night. I'm okay, Mom."

Joe was the man for the times. His trainer, John Roxborough, did not want Joe to be like Jack Johnson, who had been the earlier champion and had lived the flamboyant lifestyle. Therefore, they developed some rules for clean living. Joe was never to have his picture taken with a white woman, never gloat over a fallen opponent, and never engage in fixed fights. He was to live and fight cleanly. Joe lived up to these rules. He was an earlier Jackie Robinson. Joe was the man and a hero to everyone, whether you were a sports fan or not. He had the image of clean living; he had dignity. He was just a quiet hero. Joe would knock out an opponent, and then just say, "Another lucky night."

I remember that during WWII Joe gave one purse to the Navy, after a fight for the Navy Relief Society. Then he volunteered and enlisted in the Army, fought another fight, and gave the purse to the Army. Later after the War, blacks became upset because the IRS came after Joe for taxes on those purses. Joe had raised between $80,000 and $90,000 for the War effort, and history reports that he never saw a dime of that money; but the IRS came after him for income taxes on those benefit fights. Joe had given up two purses to the military during the War and yet they were after him. Blacks did not like that at all.

Joe did not act like many of the conceited athletes today. He would associate with common folks. He would give money to people on the street. This is one reason many people placed Joe on a pedestal. He was a black hero trying to make it in a white-dominated country. He was just what blacks needed at that time. Of course, we later discovered that Joe's living had not been spotless. Where famous leading ladies of the movies were concerned, he was not squeaky clean.

Joe Louis died on April 12, 1981. The man I had looked up to for forty-five years was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery. One year later, he was posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest award given to civilians. That's how big Joe Louis was.

Kansas City Monarchs: I have discussed how Rube Foster came to Kansas City and formed the Negro National League. These were great teams playing great baseball. What boy does not discover big league baseball when he is nine or ten? Well I did, and the Negro Leagues were in their prime then; and *the* team in black baseball was the Kansas City Monarchs. They were ours, they were in my backyard, and they were the New York Yankees of the Negro Leagues. Their first baseman, Buck O'Neil, used to say kids remember their first ballgame, but not their first day of school. How true is that? The *place* I sought was seeking me.

The Monarchs had great ballplayers when I was a kid, even though I had missed two of the best in the game. The player, Wilber Rogan, was their first great pitcher. His nickname, "The Bullet," tells you something about his fastball. Rogan was a great athlete. Although he played before my time, in the '20s and early '30s, as a child, I would still see him in the park down on the Paseo Boulevard playing dominos. The Monarchs also had "Cool Papa" Bell for a couple of years. He was described by some as the fastest man ever to play baseball. "So fast he could flip the switch and be under the covers before the lights went out" was one of the stories they used to tell about Cool Papa's speed.

In my time, the Monarchs had Frank Duncan, a catcher; and Satchel Paige. They had pitchers Hilton Smith, Lefty LaMarque, Gene Richardson, and Connie Johnson. On first base was John Buck O'Neil who later was their manager. At shortstop was Jackie Robinson, and then later Ernie Banks. A third baseman was Herb Sewell. Earl Taborn was behind the plate. Right fielder was Ted Strong who also played basketball with the Harlem Globetrotters. The center fielder was Willard Brown. One year they had "Double Duty" Radcliffe, who could pitch one game in a double header and catch the second. The Monarchs had many great players, and I worshipped them.

Another player that I watched as a young boy was Goose Tatum, who was not a Monarch but came to K.C. with the Indianapolis Clowns. Goose could stand up as straight as an arrow, and his arms were so long he could scratch his knees. Norman Lumpkin, a Negro League outfielder, once described Goose as "the man so limber he looked like he didn't have no joints." Goose played first base with the Indianapolis Clowns, who often came to play in Blues Stadium. We are talking about some talented athletes who could do everything with that baseball. The Clowns would fill the stadium. They could handle

the ball and they played well. They did all this crazy stuff with the baseball—kind of like a baseball version of the Globetrotters. In fact, Goose Tatum later became famous as one of the Harlem Globetrotters' stars.

The Monarchs were the longest running franchise in Negro League history, playing thirty-seven seasons. They won thirteen League Championships and two World Series. Five of those pennants came when I was still very young. From 1947, when I was eleven years old, until 1955 when I was off to college, the Monarchs sent twenty-four players to the major leagues. To a black youngster, in his formative years, it would be my first indication that *the times* were changing.

On Sunday afternoon, ten thousand people would go to see the Monarchs play a double header. Satchel Paige would usually pitch the first three or four innings, and Hilton Smith would pitch the second game. Sometimes Lefty LaMarque would finish up. Folks came directly from church. Preachers altered their sermon lengths when the Monarchs were in town. Church let out early, and then everyone hopped on the streetcars. It was a festive time. People were dressed, and I do mean dressed to the nines. The women had their hats and gloves on. Men wore suits and top hats. Families would bring picnic baskets full of meatloaf, fried chicken, homemade pies, and other goodies. The Indianapolis Clowns, the Memphis Red Sox, the Birmingham Black Barons, and the Newark Eagles are teams I remember seeing.

The Sunday double headers were a big deal because these would be the league games against the best teams. During the week, the Negro Leaguers would go barnstorming to play teams in the small towns across the countryside, to make money to support the team; but Sundays were special, because it was the best against the best, and Blues Stadium was the place to be in Kansas City.

It wasn't just blacks in the stands, either. The whites in Kansas City recognized, at the time, that the Monarchs played better baseball than the Kansas City Blues, the Yankees' white farm team. It was a transformative thing in the history of integration. When the Monarchs were formed, 1920–1922, they played in the segregated American Association Park. History books report that blacks were forced to sit in the upper fourteen rows of the stadium, the black section, even when black teams were playing and there were no white fans in the lower seats. When they moved to the new Muehlebach Stadium in 1923, the "Whites Only" signs were left up for the Blues games, the white team's games, but taken down for the Monarchs' games. There is no doubt that the level of baseball the Monarchs played, the attraction of white fans to the black games, and the media publicity of the two racial groups peacefully sitting together and enjoying the national pastime was one of the early forces driving the end of segregation. That was the biggest thing the Monarchs did. They brought black and white fans together in the same stadium to watch a ballgame in harmony, and that happened plain and simple because the Monarchs were good ballplayers. For a young man who wanted to be an athlete, this top-level baseball was there to watch, to emulate, and to worship.

But the best thing about it for a young person like me was one could see these guys down in the Parade Park on Paseo Boulevard, sitting around or playing dominos, or see them down by the Streets Hotel, "the Hotel" for

blacks when I was growing up. That was where Joe Louis stayed, where Paul Roberson stayed, where Count Basie, Lena Horne, and "Mr. B"—Billy Eckstine—stayed when they came to town. Of course, the Streets Hotel was a block from the YMCA, which was a block from the Paseo Pool. It was probably three or four blocks from Lincoln High where I would later go to school on 21st and Woodland. The Streets was on the corner of Eighteenth and Paseo, and Eighteenth Street was where it was happening in Kansas City. Everything was right there together. The *place* you seek is seeking you.

I got to know these athletes and entertainers a bit because the Streets was the only place they could stay. Like the houses of the day, the Streets was not air-conditioned, and during the sweltering hot Kansas City summers, people had to cool off somewhere. That somewhere was Parade Park, this big park was right near the Streets. I was down there all the time playing baseball in that same Parade Park, where the players hung out. Our only outdoor black swimming pool was right there. Our church was right there, and so was the Paseo Y. I would go to all these places, and there was a concrete walk that connected them. When I finished swimming at the pool, or shooting hoops at the Y, we would naturally walk over to the park and play baseball.

I can close my eyes and still see that park. It has long picnic tables. There were big trees all around the park, with the branches hanging over and shading the picnic tables. It would be cool under those trees in the heat of the hot summer days, and all the players would be out there cooling off in the shade, slapping the dominoes down, or playing checkers. Wilbur, Satchel, Buck, and other big athletes would be out there. The middle of the park was open. It had two big ball diamonds, where we boys would play baseball. Sometimes the professional players would show us baseball things, such as how to do this, and how to play that. Can you imagine a ten-year-old kid having someone like Satchel Paige show you how to throw a fast ball, or Willard Brown show you how to hit a curve ball, or maybe Hilton Smith showing you how to hold a runner? These athletes were all right there.

At first, my folks took me to the Monarch games; but after I got a little older, my friends and I would sneak in. I don't think they have ever made stadiums that kids could not get into. We had a railroad tie that we used to lay against the outside wall over there and many a night when the Monarchs or the Blues were playing, the fellows and I would run up the railroad tie, jump the fence, and we would be in the ballpark. We would start running around in there, and the park officials could not catch us soon enough to figure out who got in free. We did not pay. We just sneaked in, watched, and learned from the great players. Other kids used to climb a tree out in left field and sit in it where they could see over the fence. Willard Brown would smash one out there towards it, and the youngsters would start falling out of that tree like wormy apples dropping in a windstorm. It was just a great time to be growing up, and a great place to do it.

I could go on forever. Wilkinson brought night games to all of baseball with his first portable lighting system for the Monarchs. From 1937 to 1955, my youthful years, the Monarchs won nine Negro National League pennants and one Negro World Series. They outdrew the Yankees farm team in Kansas City, and once Jackie broke the racial barrier, the Monarchs had more players

going up to the majors than any team. Twenty-four players from the Monarchs eventually went to the majors. We had that many good players come through Kansas City. As I look back, of all the Monarch players I saw, four stand out to me today. They are Satchel Paige, Hilton Smith, Jackie Robinson, and Willard Brown. All four are now in the Hall at Cooperstown.

Satchel Paige: Leroy "Satchel" Paige was born dirt poor in a four-room shack in Mobile, Alabama, but he rose to become, according to Bob Feller, one of the top five pitchers in the history of baseball. Larry Tye, Satchel's biographer, says in *Satchel* that Paige learned to pitch when a white gang had thrown rocks at him. He says Satchel developed a hesitation in mid-delivery, when the kids he was throwing at would start to duck, just as he was releasing a rock in their direction. That famous hesitation would fool batters for fifty years.

Satchel learned to pitch in the streets, but it was Edward Byrd "paying forward" who saved him as a ball player. At age twelve Satchel was sentenced to the Alabama Reform School for Juvenile Negro Law-Breakers for stealing some trinkets from the five-and-dime. Fortunately, the reform school in Mount Meigs turned out to be more like an orphanage. The Alabama Federation of Colored Women's Clubs had opened the school. It had farm work, schoolwork, guidance, and structure that was based on Booker T. Washington's philosophy and the Tuskegee Institute, which was located down the road. There was also baseball and Coach Byrd. In *Satchel: The Life and Times of an American Legend,* Larry Tye describes what Edward Byrd saw in his protégé: a "manful boy" over six feet tall and only 140 pounds—perfect for baseball. Byrd then knew that Satchel's talents could not be wasted.

Byrd got his wish. Satchel would say later in life that the six-year experience at Mount Meigs made a man out of him. According to Tye, after Satchel's release at age eighteen, the white Mobile Bears team asked Satchel to show them his stuff. Tye wrote that when Satchel finished his pitching, one of the Bears players told Satchel, "We sure could use you if only you were white."

The Bears of course did not take Satchel, but Alex Herman, owner of the black Chattanooga White Sox, did. Alex Herman's son, Kirk, told Tye, that his father was driving down Congress Street and saw this kid throwing oyster shells. He was raggedy. He threw from a distance of twenty to thirty feet at telegram poles. He threw it fast and curved it; and he hit the poles every time.

The rest of Satchel's story is history and it was my privilege to have a seat. I would see Satchel at Parade Park, out there slamming down dominoes. My favorite memory, though, is the time I saw him in Parade Park exercising his famous stunt to show his control. Someone told Satch that he was not all that great. Of course, these respected players always had to prove themselves, so when they said that to Satch, I saw him remove a wrapper from a stick of gum. Satchel put this wrapper down on the ground, backed up, and threw eight-out-of-ten right over that gum wrapper. Whoosh—right straight over that wrapper. Whoosh—dead center. Whoosh—there it went again! Eight of ten, right over the top of that gum wrapper. I saw it with my own eyes. I think there was a method to that madness, though. After throwing at that

gum wrapper, home plate must have looked two miles wide when he got on the mound.

Satchel was known throughout history as a colorful character. He was a crowd pleaser. One of his tricks was to call the fielders in. Satchel would send his team to the dugout, and then he and just the catcher would be out there. He would then strike the side out. Later on, he would sit on a rocking chair in the bullpen. There is the story of them hitting a ball directly to him when he was playing right field during one game, except Satchel was over in the stands getting a cigarette lit when the ball landed where he should have been standing.

Satch had all these sayings. "Don't look back. Something might be gaining on you." "Age is a case of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it don't matter." "My pitching philosophy is simple—keep the ball way from the bat." Of course, the one that probably rang truest was, "I ain't ever had a job, I just always played baseball."

A lot of Satchel's showmanship was of course an act—P. T. Barnum in spikes. He knew what he was doing, even if it looked like he did not. Satchel was what I call "slick smart." He developed that because it was the image that whites wanted of him at the time. He marketed himself that way. He knew he could sell tickets with the catchy sayings and all. It was a way of attracting the gate, of making money. Satchel did what the times called for. As Larry Tye stated it, "Growing up in the Deep South, he knew better than to flaunt the rules openly, so he did it opaquely. He made his relationships with the press and the public into a game, using insubordination and indirection to challenge his segregated surroundings."

If you think Satchel was just a showman, you are wrong. Satchel could play. Satchel could pitch. Probably the best description ever of both Satchel the showman and Paige the ballplayer was in a column by Marvin McCarthy from the *Chicago Daily Times*, quoted by Tye in his book. In this article, McCarthy describes the 1934 East-West Negro Leagues All-Star game in Chicago, where Satchel Paige "nods a nod that Hitler would give his eye for . . . raises two bony arms high toward the heaven, lets them sink slowly to his chest. Seconds pass like hours." Then, all of a sudden, that infamous long arm shoots forward, the ball hitting the catcher's glove like a bullet. Strike one.

That was Satchel. Satchel Paige pitched everywhere. East Coast. Midwest. California. Latin America. Mexico. The Baseball Biography Project says Paige kept an almanac himself, which had him pitching more than 2,500 games and playing for 250 teams. Of course, historians debate those numbers because they came from Satchel himself; but Larry Tye says it is plausible.

Although Satchel pitched everywhere, in 1940 he ended up in Kansas City with the Monarchs. Sometime in the '30s Satchel had lost his arm strength. J. L. Wilkinson took a chance on him, and there is an often-told story about how "Satchel got his arm back." To throw as long and as hard as he threw, and to pitch as often as he pitched—he was like a reliever—Satchel had a body that was just exceptional. Satchel would pitch in K.C. for the next seven years until he got the call from the Cleveland Indians.

In the summer of '48, I was eleven years old when Satchel got what he wanted all his life. One year after Jackie had gone, Satch was called up. When

the 43-year-old black pitcher took the mound the first night and gave up a leadoff single, the stadium was abuzz. Larry Tye notes that the audience was doubtful Satchel still had it in him. However, as Tye writes, they had their answer just six pitches later, with three outs and a called strikeout.

That was the stuff Satchel had. Satchel was not done making splashes like that, however. In 1965, when Satch was fifty-nine, the showman Charley Finley signed the showman Satchel Paige to pitch against the Red Sox. Some thought it was Satchel Appreciation Night, but Paige had other ideas. In three innings, he threw just twenty-eight pitches to get nine outs, with one strike out and no walks. The Major League longevity record he set that night will never again be broken. I could go on and on about Satchel; but do not take my word. Read Tye's book.

Although Satchel got to the majors and later to the Hall, he never got what he really wanted, and that was to be first. When Satchel was in his prime, nobody was looking to integrate white baseball. Although Satchel was not the first to break the racial barrier, he was the first to blaze the trail. Satchel and his barnstorming Satchel Paige All-Stars proved not only that blacks and whites could play together, but that there were superior black ballplayers. What about Satchel's showmanship? Do not think for a minute that white owners were not watching him draw large numbers of fans to the ballpark. In their heads, they were multiplying those numbers times the ticket prices. Do not think that they were not noticing that half of those faces in the stands were black and the other half was white.

Yep, I watched ole Satch earn a place at the table of history, just like Joe and Jesse and Jackie. However, you do not know the irony of it. Satchel may not have even been the best pitcher for the Monarchs. That title goes to my friend, Hilton Smith. There I was, watching and learning from not only one, but two of the greatest pitchers ever in the game.

Hilton Smith: Satchel was the showman, but Hilton Smith holds the bigger place in my heart. Perhaps because he was the workhorse. Maybe it was because in his twelve years with the Monarchs, he won twenty or more games every year. Then, maybe it was because I went to school with his two sons. Hilton Jr. was a year ahead of me, and on our football team; DeMorris (Mickey) was two years behind me and the best athlete in his class. Mickey ran track with me and "had a cup of coffee" in the minor leagues, as we say in Kansas City. "Cup of coffee" is when you are called up but don't last. When Hilton was taken posthumously into the Hall at Cooperstown, Mickey gave the acceptance speech for his father. I could tell you all about Hilton, but Mickey does a better job in his personal interview that was given to Steve Davis:

> There were four induction speeches at Cooperstown that day in 2001: Dave Winfield, Kirby Pucket, Bill Mazeroski, and myself for my father Hilton. I don't like to read speeches. That was a concern when I gave the acceptance, because the people from the Hall didn't know what I was going to say. It had taken a lot of lobbying, and thirty years, for the Hall to recognize Dad after Satchel was first admitted in 1971.

My father grew up in Giddings, Texas, and learned to play baseball from his father, a coach. It was rural, and as with most kids, he threw rocks. His first bat was a tree limb. His first baseball was an old sock, stuffed with everything he could find. They played with that, and they practiced on the cow field, of course being careful where they ran, because of the calling cards the cows left on the ground.

Around 1932 or 1933 Dad went to San Antonio where he won thirty-one games and lost one. That's when the Monroe Monarchs signed him, and Dad pitched against the Pittsburgh Crawfords, who at the time had Satchel and Josh Gibson. In 1935, he went to Bismarck and played with Satchel Paige and Double Duty Radcliffe. That year they went to Wichita for the National Baseball Congress tournament, where all the white major leaguers would go—before Kenesaw Landis said NO MORE, because the blacks were beating them. Bismarck won that championship with Satchel setting a strikeout record that still stands, and Dad setting the shutout record per inning, which stood until ten or fifteen years ago.

In 1937, my father went to the Kansas City Monarchs and played there until 1948. In those days, most players had to get a job in the offseason to support their families. Dad usually worked in the slaughterhouses in the West Bottoms of Kansas City. Dad came too soon to make the majors. He was forty years old when Jackie went up.

My father and Satchel were quite different. Satchel was "a very intelligent business person." That of course is a fancy term for a showman. During the offseason, when they barnstormed across the country, the Satchel All-Stars flew. It was unheard of for a black ball team to travel in an airplane then. There were no contracts in the Negro Leagues until Jackie went up in '47. When Satchel would have a disagreement with an owner, because the owner did not want to pay, Satchel said "okay, fine, I'll go someplace else." Satchel knew the people came to see him, so he wanted a percentage of the gate, and usually he would pitch three innings. Then my Dad or one of the other pitchers relieved him. In the regular season, my Dad was the starter. It was only during the barnstorming that he would relieve Satchel. If you look at my Dad's record, from 1937 to 1948, he was the winningest pitcher in the history of the Kansas City Monarchs.

My Dad was a trailblazer, much like Bill Myles would be a pioneer himself with the places he would go later in life. It was something you didn't normally see here. It started when Bill would become part of the only all-black American Legion Baseball team in the United States, a team where I later followed Bill. Looking back, those of us in Kansas City were so fortunate. But we didn't know then what was going on. We were just out there playing.

Hilton Smith was probably as good a pitcher in that day and time as Satch was. Bob Feller once said Smith was better than Satchel Paige. However, Hilton did not have this colorful image. You do not know about Hilton Smith unless you are a baseball historian; but everybody knows about Satchel Paige.

The above comments by his son are good reasons that Hilton has a big place in my heart. Another big reason for my admiration is that Hilton had an eye for talent. When it came time to find the right black ballplayer to integrate baseball, Hilton Smith instructed them, to "look at Jackie."

Jackie Robinson: After Satchel and Hilton, Jackie Robinson came along. Early in 1945 Jackie was coaching basketball at Sam Houston College in Austin, Texas when the Monarchs offered him $400 per month to play for them. He played forty-seven games at shortstop that first year for the Monarchs, hitting .387 with five home runs, and stealing thirteen bases.

I knew Jackie before the world knew Jackie. I was nine years old and we saw Jackie, as they say, up close and personal. He roomed at the Paseo Y and played in the Blues Stadium that we were sneaking into. The most famous black athlete since Joe Louis, the man who would soon break the color barrier of Major League Baseball, was hanging out at my childhood haunts.

We kids all tried to walk like Jackie—pigeon-toed. He was our idol. One day, someone was messing with Jackie at the Y, and we heard him say to the person, "I'll turn your nose up so far it'll rain in it." That became the saying my buddies and I would use. We would walk around saying to people, "I'll turn your nose up so it'll rain in it." We thought that was so cool, and well, you have to be mighty tough to turn somebody's nose up so it will rain in it, especially when you are only nine years old.

Jackie, of course, broke the color barrier of Major League Baseball in 1946 when he played in the minors for the Montreal Royals of the International League. Then on April 15, 1947, Jackie made his major league debut at Ebbets Field with the Brooklyn Dodgers. The history books say there were about 26,000 on hand and more than 14,000 were black. I was only ten years old but I knew he was our hero. Buck O'Neil talked about Jackie during a 2003 *Jerry Jazz Musician* interview with Paul Hallaman. Buck told Hallaman how he thought Jackie's achievement was really the start of the Civil Rights Movement. Jackie was one of the best ballplayers in the country and he had support of the black community; when he entered the major league, he had in fact started a movement that would echo in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, Rosa Parks standing up for herself on the bus, and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s efforts.

When Jackie broke the racial barrier he instantly made the Brooklyn Dodgers a national team. Before that, only the Yankees were a national team. Jackie changed that. The railroad porters tell about going to see Jackie when they made stops at cities where he was playing. Look at pictures of the old games. The ones with Jackie are the ones with many black faces in the stands.

Can you imagine what it was like for me to have seen him first as a kid at the Paseo Y and then to see him go on and accomplish that? How many people are lucky enough to be at a place where they could rub shoulders with history? People ask me what it was like to be in the black community when Jackie did that. I can only explain it from a kid's standpoint. Jackie was "the man."

On a summer evening, you could walk down the street and listen to baseball on the radio, just as I said you could listen to Joe Louis's fights. Again, it

was searing hot, and people would be on their porches with the radios blasting. Even black grandmothers that did not know about or follow baseball would be listening to the broadcasts of games in which Jackie played. The announcers on the radio would say, "Jackie stole home," and then the grandmothers would say, "I knew they were going to blame him for something." Jackie could run. He would steal two bases, and I would hear the grandmothers say, "I knew they would blame him for something." They thought the play-by-play announcers were calling Jackie a thief! Then the next day it would be in the paper that Jackie had three hits and stole two bases. These grandmas and older ladies would say the same thing, "Well, I just knew they were going to end up blaming him for something. I knew they were going to say he did something bad."

People from Kansas City would go to see him play in St. Louis, because that was as close as the Dodgers got. I saw him play with the Monarchs and saw him in Chicago against the Cubs when I was there with my mother, but I never got the opportunity to see him in St. Louis.

Jackie took the Negro Leagues' brand of ball to the majors. The Negro game was a speed game. It was a lot of hit-and-run in the Negro Leagues. I would hear Buck O'Neil tell stories about how fast Jackie was. It was like the stories about Cool Papa Bell, who they said was so fast he could 'turn out the lights and be back in bed before the lights went out.' Jackie worried the pitchers to death with his running, but he was just playing like the rest of the players in the Negro leagues. I mean, he stole home plate nineteen times in the major leagues. That is ninth on the all-time list for stealing home; but everyone ahead of him played much earlier, in the dead ball era before Babe Ruth, when they relied much more on stolen bases.

Jackie Robinson was bright. He played hard. I could see how competitive he was. I have always liked competitors, and he was one of the most competitive men that I ever knew. That is why I always liked Jim Brown. One of the reasons I liked a Michael Jordan or a Ted Williams was because of how competitive they were. Jackie was one of the most competitive of them all. He knew how to compete. Although he had a temper, he did not let anyone throw his game off. I read how pitchers would throw balls at his head, and what Jackie did to get even with them—which was to lay down a bunt down the first base line. He did that against Sal Maglie, the Giants pitcher. Jackie just laid down a bunt, and when Maglie tried to field it, Jackie ran right over him going down the line to first. That was his way of getting back. Finally, the opponents got wise, and people told me Maglie would not go over there for the bunt. He just would not go over to cover first anymore, because Jackie had figured out a way to run him over. Of course, Jackie was good enough that if he wanted to lay the bunt down the first baseline, well, he had no problem getting it down.

Jackie endured many injustices. I think this actually motivated Jackie rather than hindered him. He performed under more pressure and with greater dignity than anybody else had to. He was called names, got death threats, and was spiked unnecessarily. He had to learn to take his foot off the base quickly because opponents spiked him and did other things to him. I think that this internalization of abuse contributed to his early death. He

was highly competitive, and he kept all the ill treatment bottled up inside of him, especially during the first two or three years. If you read his life story—and I have read seven or eight books on Jackie Robinson—what always comes through is how competitive he was. Whether it was playing cards or doing anything, Jackie was competitive.

Jackie was a great athlete. Jackie had the education. Jackie was younger than Satchel Paige. In Branch Rickey's story, he said he was looking for a player who had an education and had competed in interracial competition. Jackie was that man. Although Jackie was born in the South, he and his mother moved to California when he was one. He had lettered in four sports at UCLA—football, basketball, track, and of course, baseball. He lived in a California community that was not segregated. He attended an interracial high school. Again, we get back to *place.*

It is ironic that Jackie broke the barrier that Hilton Smith was too old to break, because Hilton was the one who brought Jackie to the Monarchs. In *Voices from the Great Black Baseball Leagues,* Hilton Smith tells of Jackie asking him for help to get a job. Hilton wrote to J. L. Wilkerson, who offered Jackie a contract the next year. Jackie broke the barrier that Satchel Paige and Hilton Smith could not because they came too early. Still, both had a part in paving the way for Jackie to do what their abilities allowed but their age did not.

Satch had all the abilities—I do not want to take anything away from him; but Robinson had the education. He was known more than just in the black communities. These two were in their prime in different eras. When Satch was in his prime, nobody was looking to integrate. Satchel had a body that was just exceptional, and that is why he was still around when Rickey brought the first black up. For gosh sakes, Satchel Paige was fifty-nine years old the last time he pitched in the major leagues. Nobody will ever again do that.

As for Hilton, well, he too eventually got a call from the Dodgers. However, unlike Jackie who went at twenty-seven, Hilton was forty when his call came. He thought he was too old, so he passed. It's a shame. Hilton Smith got the two calls he deserved, but they both came too late—first the call from the Dodgers, and the second from the Hall after he had already passed.

For Jackie, *time* and *place* were right. I was there to see it and to worship it. Little did I know then that, much like Jackie, time and place would eventually converge, too, for one Billy Myles, later in my own life. *The place you seek is seeking you.*

Willard Brown: Another player I admired was Willard Brown. I just thought Willard was "the man." A strong, powerful outfielder, Willard was a home-run slugger who today we call a "gamer." Willard came through in big games. After Jackie got the call, Willard was one of the next ones to go, but he was another one for which the call came too late. He only lasted twenty-one games. "You've got to remember, Bill, Willard was thirty-six when he went," Mickey Smith once told me. But there was more to it.

In the late forties, Willard went to the St. Louis Browns, a last-place team. While Jackie had thousands at his debut, Joe Posnanski wrote in *The Soul of Baseball* that the Browns only drew 478 fans to a game the week before Willard went up. One of the Browns' outfielders did not show up for a game, in

protest of signing Willard. Posnanski retells Buck O'Neil's story of Willard Brown hitting the first home run by a black man in the American League. Willard was sent in unexpectedly to pinch hit and did not have a bat so he grabbed a bat off the team's best hitter, Jeff Heath. Willard then smashed one 428 feet off the wall in dead center, and Willard's speed made it an inside the park home run. When Willard came back to the dugout, no one shook his hand, no one congratulated him, no one even acknowledged him. Then, according to Buck, Jeff Health took the bat Willard had used and smashed it against the wall. Posnanski wrote that Willard Brown "talked with Buck about that moment a lot—the moment when he watched pure hatred crashing against a dugout wall." Posnanski explained that Buck O'Neil repeated that story to kids in schools all across the country. He wrote that Buck would then look those kids in the eye and ask, "What is the lesson of Willard Brown?" This brings me to Buck.

Buck: Buck is Buck O'Neil, of course, one more Monarch of my era that deserves some due. Buck O'Neil played first base and was the Monarchs' manager during my time. I will tell you later how I was fortunate to share the podium with Buck once at an important event dedicating a statue at the Royals' Kauffman Stadium. But the most important statue I associate with Buck is the life-size bronze of Buck at the location where he and I sometimes stood and talked, on the "Field of Legends" in the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, at Eighteenth and Vine in Kansas City.

Buck O'Neil was a first baseman who played sixteen seasons with the Monarchs, 1937–1955, and served as the team's manager for eight. He batted over .300 for five seasons and played in four East-West All-Star games and two Negro Leagues World Series. Following the demise of the Negro Leagues, Buck was a scout with the Chicago Cubs for twenty-three years.

Despite being a player, manager, scout, and the first black coach in Major League Baseball, Buck is best known for his tireless work as the ambassador to preserve the memory of the Negro Leagues through the establishment of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. Right up to his passing, at age ninety-four, Buck traveled the country raising funds for the museum so that our children and grandchildren and their children will never forget the way the Negro Leaguers loved the game.

There are twelve bronze statues on the Field of Legends inside the museum. That all-star team contains Rube, Josh, Satch, Oscar, Cool Papa, and the others. Of the twelve players, eleven are in the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. Only Buck is not. In 2006, the Hall of Fame at Cooperstown established a panel of baseball experts to induct one final group of Negro Leaguers. It was to honor those overlooked. On the final chance of the final induction for the Negro Leagues, Buck's selection was considered inevitable. It would be a home run. The day the announcement was made, a large crowd gathered at the Negro Leagues Museum to celebrate with Buck. Everyone knew what would happen. It was a party. But the call never came and it slowly dawned on those assembled what was happening. When the Hall announced that seventeen had been taken, incredibly Buck was not one of them.

The outrage across the country was predictable. Anyone who thought it

was not an injustice should read Joe Posnanski's *The Soul of Baseball: A Road Trip Through Buck O'Neil's America.* Making amends, the Hall established the Buck O'Neil Lifetime Achievement Award and in 2008 placed a statue of Buck right inside the entrance. That statue is located outside the learning center, in front of Inductee Row and the Hall of Fame Gallery. In a personal interview that was conducted by Steve Davis, Hilton Smith's son, Mickey, explains it all this way:

> Most people don't understand. When my father went in, there were four categories: Baseball Player, Manager, Umpire, or Owner. With Buck, if you looked at him as a player, you had to evaluate him as a player with everyone else who was a player, or as a manager, against every other manager. They didn't have scout categories or ambassador categories. Don't misunderstand me. Buck did an outstanding job of telling the Negro League Baseball story. What he did was wonderful. But he missed the hall by one vote.
>
> I told people then, from my own perspective, that even though he didn't get in, eventually he will. He did. With the Buck O'Neil Lifetime Achievement Award that the Hall of Fame created, and his life-size statue right there at the entrance, he will be recognized more so than if he had been inducted. Every time someone comes there, they are going to see Buck O'Neil, big as life, standing right there. My father has a plaque. But now Buck has a statue and an award in his name.

On a sunny, sultry day in July of 2006, the class Buck never made was inducted. On the podium that day in Cooperstown, representing the last class that made it from the Negro Leagues was the one who did not, Buck O'Neil. The Hall asked Buck to speak for all of those who were honored. After all, all seventeen were dead, some died more than fifty years ago. When he took the stage that day, Buck had every right to be biter. Instead, he touched on the honor of playing in the Negro Leagues. He went on to say that he did not hate those who kept him out of the Hall of Fame; he couldn't hate another human being. At the end of his speech, he asked everyone in the audience to hold hands. Buck O'Neil joined hands with some of the very people who had kept him out of the Hall and led several choruses of the spiritual, "The Greatest Thing." That was Buck O'Neil. That was the Negro Leagues. That was the history I lived through.

All of the aforementioned athletes were my heroes. Their exploits and athletic accomplishments were part of my upbringing and inspirations. If they could do it, I could too. They provided this young black boy with the dreams and aspirations that would eventually carry me far beyond the confines of Westport, far beyond the boundaries of the black section of Kansas City, Missouri in the 1940s, and far into a new world that one imagined but not yet seen. That was how *Place* was at work on a young Billy Myles in Blues Stadium on Sunday afternoons in Kansas City. That was the foundation I stood on as I took my first big step into that new world. The journey would start at the Castle on the Hill.

Chapter 6

A TIGER IS BORN

In the fall of 1950, Monarchs gave way to Tigers. I left the comfort of R.T. Coles School to become a Lincoln High Tiger—and a football player.

There were ten public high schools in Kansas City. They were Westport in my neighborhood, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, Central, Manual, Paseo, Van Horn, R. T. Coles, and Lincoln. I would have attended nearby Westport in my neighborhood, had I been able to go there. Because Westport was a white school, my school was Lincoln High. It was eighteen blocks east of Main Street, in the black neighborhood. Every day I would get on public transit and ride right past Westport High, five miles across town to Lincoln. There was no free busing. Instead, my parents paid the fare for a public bus. Of course, the white students could walk to school and did not have that expense.

The segregated Lincoln High provided academically what was comparable to the eight other white K.C. high schools. All black students not taking a trade, no matter where they lived in Kansas City, had to go to this one school. They went right past their neighborhood schools, and they did it on their dime. Not only were the Lincoln students all black, but so was the faculty.

I was out of high school before integration occurred, but it happened soon after I left Kansas City for college. I am five years older than my youngest brother, Phil, who became football captain and the senior class president of the Westport High School that I could not attend. There were only three blacks in his 1959 graduating class, but it was the beginning of racial integration. This was the beginning of the biggest transformation of our society since President Lincoln, our school's namesake, issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which was the prelude to the 13th Amendment that ended slavery and set my grandmother free, almost one hundred years earlier. My parents did not have to pay to bus my brother, Phil, miles from home to attend an all-black school, as they had done for me at Lincoln High.

Lincoln High Football: Lincoln High was first established in 1867, but the Lincoln I attended was the third building. Charles Coulter wrote how in 1921, the year my parents had arrived, the black community in Kansas City had banded together to battle for a new Lincoln High building. Coulter tells how a memorandum signed by every prominent organization in the black community described the unsatisfactory conditions at Lincoln High at that time. In summary, the thirty-year-old school that was built for 250 students served 750. Gas lines to the stoves in the kitchen leaked, which meant classes had to be held with the windows open. Six to eight classes a day were held on the

stairs. The school did not have a gymnasium, study hall, library, science lab, or art department. Teachers were without desks.

It took fifteen years to change these conditions. In 1931, the Kansas City School Board secured property at 21st and Woodland for the Lincoln High that I would attend. Coincidently, the new building opened during the fall of 1936, the year I was born. Sitting on the crest of one of Kansas City's many hills, it afforded a view of downtown, the Paseo YMCA, and Eighteenth and Vine. The new building accommodated 1,100 students, housed two gymnasiums and a swimming pool, and cost $700,000 in 1936 dollars to construct. Legend has it that when it opened, the faculty marched from the old building at 19th and Tracy, up the hill in unison, to what would be nicknamed the "Castle on the Hill." Fourteen years later, I would say of that Castle, *the place I sought was seeking me.*

I was always interested in sports, and I truly wanted to play sports; but as I have already said, I was not allowed to go out for the eighth grade football team at R. T. Coles. I could have lied about where I was going to attend high school in order to play in the eighth grade, but I did not. I told the truth; and at Lincoln, my desire to play was fulfilled.

Every Thanksgiving, Lincoln High in Kansas City, Missouri played Sumner High School of Kansas City, Kansas. It was the battle of the black schools from the two cities. My mother took me to that game for the first time as a young boy. It was the first football game I ever saw where players played in pads and equipment. Sometimes there were fights after the games. If you were from Kansas City, Missouri, you were not supposed to go over to Kansas City, Kansas—and vice versa.

In the early fall of 1950, I was thirteen years old when I arrived at Lincoln High as a freshman. In August, I saw in the *Kansas City Call* that football practice was going to start. When I showed up for Coach Bill White's first practice, I was the first person from Westport to go out for football in years. Westport youths were not tough, and they were not used to all that competition. Then, too, it was very far. Of course, in those days our parents didn't chauffeur us around and most families only had one car. We were no exception.

I did not know how to put on football equipment. All my previous football games had been played in street clothes, even though I had been playing sandlot tackle football for some time. I was thirteen years old, yet I did not know anything about my equipment, so I watched the other players to figure out how to put my pads on. My grandson Markus is fifteen today, and this is his ninth year of playing in pads. I was thirteen and did not know. I actually put the thigh pads in backwards, with the long pointed edge on the inside and the little cutout on the outside. That made the long and pointed edge on the inside. You can imagine where it hurt and it was killing me. To this day, I think to myself, *Myles, you're lucky to be a father.* Fortunately, after the first practice, I figured out the right way to put those pads in my pants. Lincoln had between 1,300 and 1,500 students and had only one team. Only three stayed of the entire freshman group that went out that year. The rest of them quit because they were beating us up.

Hitting The Sled: One of the early experiences I had in football was cutting my eye on the two-man sled. Lincoln had this two-man blocking sled, made of a metal frame with pads on front, and we would hit it . . . *Boom!* One day Coach White was riding the sled and I hit it first . . . *Boom!* Then this other guy, who was a little late, hit it . . . *Boom!* We did not hit it together as we were supposed to. Then I went to hit it again. Well, because he was late, I missed the pads on the second attempt and landed on the metal frame at the back of the sled, and I cut my eye. It was bad. Of course, we had no doctor, no trainer, no EMS handy. Coach just taped it together. He put tape all around my eye and over the back of my head and in my hair. I went home that evening, and Mom and I took the tape off by soaking it in water with a sponge to ease the tape off, since it was matted in my hair. I got no stitches or anything. Mom just pushed it back together and put a piece of tape on it and prayed. I still have the scar to this day.

The next morning Mom retaped the cut. I went back to practice and stood out by the gate where we entered the field. I did not think that I was supposed to practice with the cut as bad as it was. Coach White came over and asked, "What are you doing? When are you going to get dressed for practice?"

I pointed and said, "Coach, it's my eye. I cut my eye yesterday, so I'm gonna observe."

He said, "Let me see it." He just reached over and ripped that tape off. Oh! That hurt. I drew back as if I were going to hit him, because it hurt that much. Coach hit me in the chest and the next thing I knew, I was lying on my back. I really wanted to cry, not because of the pain, but because this man had done this to me and there was nothing I could do. I could not whip this man, but I felt like he had done me an injustice. I had been a boxer, but I could not hit Coach. I just went inside and dressed for practice. That was it. My mother advised me to quit, but Coach White made me a man that day. I was determined to stick it out. I was beginning to develop the attitude needed to be a tough athlete.

Three freshmen stuck it out that season. I, along with Leroy Williams, who later became team captain with me when we were seniors, and Alfred Miller, a 260-pound student who had just come from Tennessee. I was the youngest on the team at age thirteen. That freshman year I started out trying to be a fullback but soon moved to tailback. Leroy Williams started at fullback on the varsity as a freshman and played clear through his senior year. We became close friends, and a few years ago I spoke at Leroy's funeral.

I played tailback in the single wing that year because Coach White had gone to that "School up North" and Michigan had run that single wing. How ironic. My first-ever football coach had gone to the school with the funny yellow wings on its helmets. Coach White's assistant was Chester Anderson, who lived behind me in Westport. He taught woodworking. We had no time limit on practice. When it got dark, Coach White would tell Coach Anderson, "Chester, get your car." Coach Anderson would get his car, point it towards the field, turn on the lights, and we could just keep on practicing—and practicing—and practicing.

In order to be a successful person and a contributor in any area, one must learn to be tough. Toughness is not hollering and screaming. It is not cussing

and jumping on people and beating them up. Toughness is being able to stick to your beliefs and follow them through. Coach White was a very tough, physical individual. He was too tough for high school. He coached only one year while I was there. They fired him as a coach after my freshman year because he was just too tough for high school boys. Coach White made you tough mentally, and in order to do it, he did many things to make you tough physically. We ran more than anybody. Our conditioning was tougher than that of players at any other school. We would run twelve to fourteen laps around the field. I was a freshman, and I got lapped several times. If you quit running, Coach would say, "Hang it up."

Players would go in and hang it up. One year Stanley Campbell was the best athlete in the senior class—a punter, a star end, and a star basketball player. He was a tremendous athlete, yet I once saw Coach White walk around in front of him and slam his hand up in Campbell's face so hard his helmet shook. Coach would get down without any pads and go at it with you. He did not have a lot to say, but everybody feared him. Many people had it in their yearbook, "Coach White thinks he's bad, and he is!"

Though Coach White was too tough for the average student, he was good for me. I could take it. Not that I would want to go through some of those drills again, those things that he put us through back then. One time the track was not big enough, so he had us run around the block. It was a big block, not a normal block. He had us running four and six laps around it, and I went home and told my folks I ought to quit. They said, "Yeah, go ahead and quit;" but they knew I wasn't going to let him do that to me, that I wouldn't let him run me off. I did not know at the time, but Coach White was also teaching me things not to do, things I would later use all my life.

Our equipment was not very good. Not everybody had a helmet at Lincoln. I can remember players coming off the field and giving their helmets to the players going in. It was not a good situation. The black schools did not have equal resources at that time. My former teammate, college All-American, and lifelong friend, Jim Buford, describes this situation to Steve Davis in a personal interview:

> Because we were a segregated school, our team equipment was not first class. That had to do with a couple of things. We weren't allocated the same level of funding, but we also were not beneficiaries of fathers' clubs and community clubs donating funds to athletics like the other (white) schools. We didn't have that kind of financial support. Even so, we didn't give that a second thought. That was just the way it was at the time. That really dawned on me after I graduated, and went to Tennessee State in Nashville, and the first day I arrived on campus I went to catch the bus to go downtown. When I climbed aboard, no one was on the bus so I just sat down in the front seat. As I looked around, I saw the sign in the front that said, "White Only." I don't know why I laughed, except that it was funny, and that was the very first time that I had experienced the "only" sign. While Kansas City didn't have signs on the buses, we did know what we could do and couldn't do, and where we could go and where we couldn't go.

That's just the way it was. Now Kansas City wasn't the Deep South. I don't remember any real racial incidents that were beyond individual kinds of incidents. Still, many things weren't equal.

Blues Stadium: Though our high school was segregated and we did not have equal facilities in terms of equipment, we did have one thing going. We played football in the big league stadium right behind our school, the same stadium where the Monarchs and the Kansas City Blues (the Yankee farm team) played. The stadium was located at 22nd Street and Brooklyn, just behind the school. Lincoln High was high on a hill, and Blues stadium was in a deep valley adjoining our practice field. It was so close we actually dressed at Lincoln High School and walked across our practice field, jumped the fence, and walked down the steps on the big hill to the field. It was so close—just a stone's throw—that we did not need to use the dressing room over there. We just stepped out the back door, and there it was.

The stadium's original name was Muehlebach Field, when it was built in 1923 in honor of George Muehlebach, owner of the Kansas City Blues minor league baseball team. The Blues name was obviously a play on the jazz that I have discussed. In 1937, the name was changed to Rupert Stadium, when Yankees' owner, Jacob Rupert, bought the Blues for the Yankee Farm System. Rupert died two years later, and in 1943 the stadium became Blues Stadium. That name stuck until I graduated in 1954, and Blues Stadium was the name of the stadium that I snuck into as a kid, the name of the stadium where I played my high school football.

Blues Stadium had a single deck-covered grandstand, with stands running in from the right foul pole, down past home plate, and out the left field line. It seated sixteen thousand people when it opened in 1923. Because it was a baseball stadium, the football field ran parallel to the first base foul line and from the third baseline out to right field. The football field was on the side where the grandstands were the biggest, which was a big deal to a youngster.

We played our football games on Thursday nights in that big league stadium. The white schools got Friday and Saturday nights for their Interscholastic League. The black schools drew the short straw. We got Thursday night. The white schools got the prime nights. Even so, what a special place it was for a high school student to play.

How many young people can say that they played in a pro stadium? How many can say they played on a field where Jackie Robinson, Satchel Paige, Willard Brown, Cool Papa Bell, Buck O'Neil, Josh Gibson, and Hilton Smith roamed? I can. How many have rolled on sod watered by the sweat of Willie Mays, Ernie Banks, and Hank Aaron? I did. How many can call home a place where the great K.C. Chiefs Buck Buchanan and Bobby Bell played? I can. Even Ringo Starr once sang there. It seemed the great ones all passed through that stadium, and there I was in my formative years playing on hallowed turf. *The place you seek is seeking you.*

As fate will have it, when Blues Stadium was built in 1923, the architect was Osborn Engineering, which is the same firm that was named to renovate Ohio Stadium in 1999, when I was part of Football Operations at The Ohio

State University. Is it a stretch to say that my Buckeye connection was present long before I was aware of it.

I Wanna Start: As stated earlier, Lincoln High changed coaches because the administration thought Coach White was too tough. My math teacher, Owen Lee, was to become head coach at the start of my sophomore year. In the spring of my freshman year, I knew he was going to be the new coach, so I went to him. "Coach Lee," I asked, "what do I have to do to start next fall? Where can I play so I can start?"

That was my whole goal, to be a starter. I remember that when I was a little boy, at the beginning of the game, the starters would take their helmets off and stand there all by themselves, while the band played the national anthem. The starters lined up for the kickoff and everyone else was on the bench. Everybody knew who the starters were. The spotlight was on them. I remember that, and it was something real important to me. When I became a high school player, I wanted to be out there when the band played the Star Spangled Banner, to be one of the starters lined up with their helmets off.

When I inquired about the position, Coach Lee said, "Well, we have a spot at guard. You're only going to be a sophomore. Why do you want to start?"

"Just put me out there for the Star Spangled Banner," I pleaded. "Just put me out there for the kickoff team, for the receiving team, just put me out there for anything." I wanted to be out there when the game started. I did not care if he took me out of the next offensive set. I desperately wanted to be out there when the ball was kicked off.

I had been playing tailback the year before in the single wing, but when Coach told me I had a chance at guard, I wanted to start so I became a lineman. It did not matter that the guard position would be a shift from the running back position I had been playing. When Coach said I had a chance there, he also told me who was at that position and that it would be between him and me.

That fall I went after my competition. When we would run wind sprints, I would get next to him. Nobody told me to do this. This was how I was competing. I was going to beat him. When we would do drills, I would cut the line to move in behind him, so he and I would end up one-on-one. It was just him and me, nose to nose, one against one. That way Coach could not just say that this player was better than I was. Now, he could say that my competition beat me most times. On the contrary, I was whipping him and Coach was seeing it. I was getting in line so I could do that. If I had just hung back and waited, Coach would never have gotten the chance to see me against him. Later, at Nebraska and Ohio State, I would tell players, "You don't know how to compete." When I got to Ohio State, I learned from Archie Griffin that he had a similar experience when he was in high school.

Coach Lee eventually noticed and asked me, "What do you think?"

I said, "Coach, he can beat me doing this, but I can do this and this and this." You do not tell the coach that his current preference cannot do this, this, and this, because he is then obligated to defend the competitor. Instead, take the positive approach and outline one's own strengths and abilities. I learned how to compete very early because of boxing. Eventually, Coach let

me start. At first, he told me that since my competitor was a senior, he had to start. However, he put me on the kickoff team, so I did start. I was not out there for the first few plays, but as the season went on, I took the job away from my competitor. It worked. I got to start four or five games that year and earned a letter as a sophomore.

Coach Lee was not the only new coach we got during my sophomore year. James McCreay became my line coach that year and my entire high school career. Once again, *place* was at work. Coach McCreay was a very intelligent fellow who had graduated from high school at age fifteen or sixteen, and was a good line coach. He taught biology, and he earned his master's degree from Ohio State University. He knew line play, a skill that eventually would dominate my entire life. The Ohio State connection occurred again, before I had any knowledge of my future with the Buckeyes.

During my sophomore year, we had an upper class tackle by the name of Eugene Hendrix, who would later play at Drake University. Hendrix decided he was going to be Lincoln High's fullback that year, and he was so good that he could tell Coach that. My friend Leroy had to move to halfback because Hendrix decided to play fullback. In the City Championship game against R. T. Coles, Coach sent me in with a play from the bench. Eugene ran our team, even though he was the fullback. I came into the huddle and told him, "Coach said call T-24."

Eugene Hendrix looked right at me and called the play, "T-33."

I said, "Coach said T-24." Hendrix gave me the look and said, "T-33 on 2." Of course, our fullback carried the ball on T-33. Eugene Hendrix had called his own number.

We ran the play, and a couple of plays later Coach took me out. He jumped all over me, "Why didn't you tell him what I told you, T-24? Why didn't you tell him T-24?"

"Coach," I said, "I did tell him, but Hendrix called T-33." Coach just walked away. Hendrix was that good. He could get away with that. If I had called T-33, I would have been in trouble. But not Eugene. Very imposing, a great athlete, he later became a great football player for Drake University, then a scientist in Texas, and was a lifelong friend of mine.

Of course, I should not talk about Hendrix. When my own senior year arrived, in another City Championship game, late in the fourth quarter, on our last score, Leroy Williams moved to my right tackle spot and I moved to his fullback position. They gave me the ball and I scored the extra point to win the game, 13-7. We just did it. Leroy said to go to his spot and carry the ball, and it was over and done before Coach knew what happened. Since I scored, what could he say? By that time, I was my own Eugene Hendrix.

My sophomore year brought me one other thing—a newfound friendship with my fellow lineman, James Buford. Buford and I played together for only two years, but became lifelong friends; he would serve as best man at my wedding. Jim's reflections explain how the things we learned in and beyond athletics, and in our communities, have stayed with us to this day. In a personal interview conducted by Steve Davis, Buford explains our friendship as following:

I met Bill at Lincoln High in 1950, when I was a sophomore and he was a freshman. Bill came out for football. He wanted to be a running back, but in his sophomore year Bill decided he was better suited for the line. I played guard and Bill later played tackle, so we toiled side by side.

Bill's brothers, of course, were musicians; but, well, Bill couldn't play anything. Athletics was his forte. Bill was quite an athlete, lettering in football, basketball, and track, and playing summer baseball as well. But Bill's best sport was football and the reason he was an extremely good athlete was because Bill is passionate and 110 percent committed to everything he does.

Bill's life is based on values, and those were learned in Westport. Everything Bill has done has centered on athletics, yet it is interesting how he has been able to weave all of the different and important aspects of life into the person that he is. If you look at those values that he has—and Bill has always spelled values with a capital V—the community's parental values were the foundation for Bill.

It started with Bill's parents being educated. They were entrepreneurs, and there were other educators and entrepreneurs in our community. You have heard the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child." Well, that notion was very much alive within the communities in which we lived. Important character traits were handed down to us—honesty, integrity, respect, responsibility, and hard work—all traits that we received not only at home, but also from the community.

The community values, with which Bill was raised, were just as strong as the family values. One of the reasons was that it was a segregated community. I think back at how the segregated period of Bill's life reinforced the values we all grew up with and played a role in Bill being the person that he is. Bill's faith has been extremely important, and from early childhood, Bill has been faithful in his spiritual beliefs. Bill was just a sponge—intellectually, emotionally, psychologically—and all of that just sunk in and molded who he was going to be.

Bill is interesting when it comes to friends. He wanted to know everybody and would do an analysis of everybody. He knew the traits they possessed. He observed how they behaved. They were all his friends, but Bill had two or three inner circles beyond that supported the kinds of things he did and the values that he held. Our friendship just blossomed because we saw in each other what we liked and valued in ourselves. Bill is the "I've got your back" type of friend, and the segregated community in which we lived nurtured our development in a way that does not happen today. Today's communities are not as close knit—because integration has probably done more to reduce the closeness of a black community than anything has. In today's world, I am no longer my brother's keeper. I still teach some and it is difficult to teach today because of the lack of respect kids have for their elders now. In our time, the elders, the seniors, were the most respected people in our community. We understood that and learned from them. We played some good football together.

Two years later in my senior year, James would go off to Tennessee State, eventually become Captain, an All-American, and win a black college football national championship. However, that was not the end of our friendship, the importance of which will be evident later.

The coaching and position changes were not the only ones I experienced in my sophomore year. For the first time, I became a basketball player. Those changes were little, compared to the bigger ones stirring in the country. I have already discussed Jackie's breaking of the Major League racial barrier back in '47. Of course, Jackie was really second in breaking the color line in professional team sports. He followed Bill Willis, who debuted in the NFL the year before. Jackie's breakthrough was bigger because baseball was bigger than football at the time, but Willis was first. As a young boy, I heard about Bill Willis and his exploits at Ohio State. Back when I was little, in '42, '43, and '44, blacks in Kansas City knew what Bill Willis was doing at Ohio State. He was the talk of the black community, and I would lie on the floor and listen to news about him on the radio. By my sophomore year, we had television and I was watching Bill Willis on TV. I would see him playing for the Browns and remember him running down Buddy Young from behind—that was the Claude "Buddy" Young, one of the fastest men to play the game. Bill had become famous in the NFL and he already been selected for the Pro Bowl.

We had Jackie and Bill breaking barriers on a professional level. In 1952, it was time for Billy Myles and his buddies to break a barrier of our own. You will never believe how it happened.

Chapter 7

TIMES THEY WERE A CHANGIN'

In the spring of 1952, I finished my sophomore year at Lincoln High School and awaited the start of my junior year. That summer was the beginning of more changes, some in my own life and others in the country. Jackie Robinson and Bill Willis had broken barriers; now it was time for my buddies and me to break one of our own.

Summer of '52: When Jackie Robinson made his Major League debut at Ebetts Field in 1947, I was ten years old. Five years later, in the summer of '52, my buddies and I would follow Jackie when we became the Jackie Robinsons of American Legion Baseball. That it happened in Kansas City was a fitting tribute to the place where Jackie had used the Monarchs as a stepping stone to the Majors. The fact that it had happened at all meant things were changing. How it happened is an amazing story.

The summer of '52 was the year I got to know Don Motley and his brother Bob. They were two fine people. Don had been a football player at Lincoln High, and his brother Robert became a famous umpire in the Negro Baseball Leagues. The Motley brothers both played important roles in black history. They were both great baseball people and great role models for me. Don told me that they were related to the Marion Motley who helped Bill Willis break the color barrier with the Cleveland Browns. I do not know if that is true, but the Motley family did come to Kansas City from Dayton, Ohio.

Don Motley was deeply involved in baseball, to the point that later in 1990 he joined Buck O'Neil and others to cofound the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum at Eighteenth and Vine in Kansas City. Don went on to become the museum's executive director in 1991 and has since retired; but, like his brother Bob, he is still on the Board of Directors.

Don's brother Bob Motley rose from a childhood during the height of racism in the South to become the famous and respected Chief Umpire in the Negro American League. Bob is the author of *Ruling over Monarchs, Giants, and Stars: Umpiring in the Negro Leagues and Beyond,* the riveting story of his life's journey. Their family lived in Anniston, Alabama, a town where I later recruited Andra Franklin, who became a very good fullback for the Nebraska Cornhuskers. Of course, I wouldn't have been able to recruit Franklin in the days when the Motley brothers lived there. Let me explain why.

The father of the two brothers died when Bob was four years old. In his book, Bob recounts his childhood fears of living on the only through street in the black section of Anniston. He wrote that when Klansmen would come through at night, honking their horns and heading into the black

neighborhood, his family knew they were on the way to a cross burning or lynching. Upon hearing them coming, Bob's mother would turn out the lights, and they would lie on the floor in fear as the Klansmen went by. Bob described not breathing a sigh of relief until hours later, when the Klansmen drove back through the other way. If the procession came back through late at night and quiet, they knew someone had been spared. If they came back honking their horns and firing their guns in the air, the family knew some black soul had paid the price of a lynching. Like many families of those times, the Motleys moved to the North to escape the terrors of the Deep South and to seek jobs and more opportunities. They found something better, first in Dayton, Ohio, and then in Kansas City, Missouri. In a personal interview that Don gave to Steve Davis, he tells his own version of the chilling story described in Bob's book:

> I was born in Anniston, Alabama, about sixty-five miles from Birmingham. When I was one year old, my father died from drinking water from a tainted well. I was a little boy when the Ku Klux Klan came by our house. They came from Birmingham, and we all had to get on the floor as Bob described in his book. I left Anniston at an early age to live in Dayton, Ohio, where my grandfather, uncle, and oldest brother lived.
>
> There is a long story behind that. I did not know it until later, after I got married and went back to visit my mother. What happened back then—there was a black family named Bush. I will never forget that name as long as I live. There was an Art Bush and a Woodrow Bush. There was also a white family whose name was Owens. I will never forget it either. The Owens family said Woodrow Bush raped their daughter. After his hanging, the daughter said she was kidding.
>
> Naturally, they were all going to go to the Bush house to hang them. That is what they did then. That is what the Klan did; they usually hanged the whole family. They all met at the Bush house, and the Klan tried to get them to come out. Instead, the Bush family opened fire on them. The family had gotten word and were waiting . . . Now they tell me the Bushes could shoot an apple off your head. I think Art shot some of them or something like that. They tell me Art escaped down through the swamp and went on to Michigan. He never went back. The family stayed in Anniston, but Art never went back.
>
> Now picture me years later, when my kids were small and we were visiting my mother. As I said, Dad had died when I was a year old, and my mother later on married one of the Bush men. When he was ninety-some years old, he became senile. We were visiting Mom, and he would sit in the room and hallucinate. 'There he is, Art,' he would say, 'I got him, Art. There's one over there. I got him. I got him.'
>
> 'I'll be damned,' I said after I listened to that. 'He was there in that house.' He stayed there in Alabama all those years, stayed there working for the white man, working with the white man, and they never knew he was one of them in that house that night. It was amazing to hear him speak like that. As I would tell my grandson, it wasn't any-

thing for the Klan to kill a black man just like they killed a fly. In those days, nothing was done about it. It's hard for people today to understand and comprehend the changes that have occurred in my lifetime.

Don Motley knew prejudice, and he had lived with racism. That makes the story he is about to tell so interesting, and ironic. People have asked how we broke the color barrier of American Legion Baseball. At the time, all I knew was that someone at the American Legion had told Don Motley that they were going to take a team into the league. It was 1952, and things were starting to change. However, there was a lot more to the story than I ever knew then, as Don Motley explains:

Bill was fifteen when we put together the only Negro American Legion Baseball team in the entire United States. One day in 1952, I received a call from a priest, Father Alvin Deen. He wanted to see me. I thought, *Now, wait one minute. I'm a hardened Baptist. What does a Catholic priest want to see Don Motley for?* Father Deen asked me to come down to the church. At that time, I was a good football player, and I figured it out. *He wants me to go to Boys Town and play football,* I thought.

I lived about ten blocks from him, and I had to walk down because I didn't have a car. Heck, I ran all the way, thinking all the time, *What does a priest want with me?* When I got there, it wasn't about football at all. What he said to me was, 'I want you to go out to the American Legion Hall and I want you to put a ball team in the American Legion league.'

'Me, Father?' I asked him, somewhat dumbfounded.

'Yes, you.'

'What about all these coaches around here?' I asked him. 'There are high school coaches that have teams, what about them?'

'No,' he said, 'we want a young blood out there.'

I went out to the Legion Hall for the meeting. They organized their teams and nobody said a word to me. They were all white, of course. Finally, they were about ready to adjourn, so I got up and said, 'I want to put a team in the American Legion league this year.'

Their jaws dropped. One man said, 'We don't want you niggers playing against us.'

Another one got up and asked me, 'Do you have $2,500 to sponsor a team in the league here?'

I stammered and stuttered badly and said, 'Well, ah, um,' the whole time thinking, *shucks! I haven't got twenty-five cents.*

About that time, a grey-haired fellow across the room jumped straight up and proclaimed, 'Well maybe he doesn't have it, but I've got it.' The man's name was John Maguire and he owned a clothing store. He had been sent by Father Deen to sponsor our team. I did not know it then, but he was in on it. He was a plant.

Then a team manager who belonged to a wealthy Post got up and said, 'I'm not going to take my team down there in that damn com-

munity.' But another manager from a wealthy post said, 'I will play you, Don.'

So, that's how we got into American Legion Baseball. To this day I do not know why Father Deen picked me to break that barrier, but he had it all figured out. Father Deen had given up his wealth to be a priest. He was a powerful man, and they put him over some schools in the black community. He set that whole thing up to get us in. I think when he saw those kids, he saw the same things my grandson and I see when we see kids on the streets today. The cycle is repeating itself now, with a different breed of kids.

I was only about twenty-one at the time. That was 1952, and I have been managing baseball ever since. We have twenty-five major league ball players that came out of our Kansas City Ban Johnson League, a league for amateur college players. Dave Cone, Rick Sutcliffe, Frank White—they all came out of this league.

But now, on my ball team you might see one, at most two, black kids. The black kids are not playing ball anymore because there is no one there to show them how to compete with the white kids. So we are going back and following the model of Father Deen. My grandson Brittan and I are putting together an academy in the inner city to teach these kids baseball. We're going to teach them how to play ball, try to get them scholarships, and most of all teach them to keep up their grades so they can pass their ACT. I have seen my grandson—just like Bill Myles did as a coach—take a kid that was headed wrong and turn him around.

Bill talks about *Place*. Bill, myself, all of us on that team were privileged to do something special, to change the guard. I didn't know Bill when I chose that team. He showed up at the tryouts like everyone else, and had to compete with some outstanding athletes. When the word got out that there was going to be a black American Legion team, there was a lot of interest.

I had no transportation then, and we had to get to games. Billy's father had an old station wagon. Bill would come by the house and get me, and we would then stack about ten or twelve ballplayers in that station wagon. Billy would drive us, and players would be lying down, stacked crossways, anything we could do to cram them into the vehicle. We would pull up to the diamond and start unloading, and people could not believe a whole team could unpile from that one station wagon.

Bill was a catcher. You have to be tough to play that position. He was just an outstanding kid and you could see that in his makeup even back then. Bill played with some darn good ball teams. He realizes now—although they didn't back then—that they were the Jackie Robinsons of Amateur Baseball. They were an all-black team, first in the country, and believe me, those kids could stack up against anybody. For practice, we would play the ex-Kansas City Monarchs ballplayers, and we beat them. Those kids could play some ball. Back in those

days, that's all the kids had a chance to do. They were just sixteen or seventeen, but I could put them up against anybody.

You could see good leadership in Billy back then. He was always sincere, a hard worker, and just a good kid. I'm not surprised he went as far as he did. Kids have a tendency of standing out, and Billy was one of them. Even so, he has never forgotten where he came from.

A lot of those boys have been successful. One or two have become doctors. Some were professional ballplayers. It is no secret that some of those kids I worked with never saw their dad sober, but they went on to college, got scholarships, and so forth.

I had to drill one thing into those ballplayers: 'No matter what they say to you, call you, no matter how unfair things are, they can't stop you from hitting the ball.' One game in particular was hard fought. We were playing against some outstanding players, who were playing college baseball. We were playing out at the old CYC stadium, and it was a treat to play out there in the white neighborhood. The umpire was calling balls and strikes wrong, calling plays wrong. I will never forget a bunch of the white fathers stood up and told the umpire, 'We'll be waiting for you at the end of the game, because we want our boys to win, but we'll be darned if we want them to win like this.' To see those fathers speak out for the first time like that was heartwarming.

Some of the teams were good to us and some were not. Can you imagine what could have happened if my players were not good kids, were not together, as they broke down racial barriers in a league and time that was still very prejudiced? Can you imagine? Those kids knew. They were mature enough to know that people wanted them to fail, and they were determined to stick together as a team. Our kids—and Billy Myles—held their own in that environment.

That was how we came to play American Legion baseball, and it was quite an honor. John Maguire and Father Deen are great heroes. I think we ended up second in the league that year. As Don says, we had some good baseball players; and we broke a barrier. At that young age, it was the first of many to come in my life.

Looking back, it might not seem like such a big deal today. Remember, though, this was two years before *Brown v. Board of Education*. Three full years passed before fourteen-year-old Emmett Till was beaten and murdered in Mississippi for allegedly flirting with a white woman. Then, too, three years later eight Southern states seceded from the National Little League organization, and formed their whites-only Dixie Youth Baseball League rather than play with blacks. It was a big deal. We knew we were doing something that others were not getting to do. We knew that we were doing something important. We knew we were being watched. We knew we had to be gentlemen at all costs. We knew. Yet at the same time, to us, right then, it was more about getting to play ball. Looking back now, I realize how much more it really was; but then, for us, we were just ballplayers, with the desire to be our best and enjoy life. One of my greatest enjoyments was Lorita Thompson.

Courting Lorita Thompson: During my junior year, I started to notice girls. One in particular was Lorita Jane Thompson. Lorita might say it took me long enough. Some people say it was love at first sight. If so, we were very young when it happened. Here is Lorita's version of the first time we met:

> Blacks could not go to white restaurants in those days. In the black community, children's birthday parties were at home, and friends' children were invited. Kids from tots all the way up to junior high school would be there. Bill and I were probably in the second or third grade when we were together at one of these parties. We still have a picture of us at the party.

Of course, Lorita and I did not really know each other then. Our paths would cross again in the eighth grade. We both went to summer school, because school let out in April that year when the Kansas City bond issue did not pass. My parents sent me to summer school to catch up. Lorita was in the same class, but she did not know that I existed. Lorita has a story for that, too:

> We were in school studying when a Westport friend who had a car came into class and asked to speak to Billy Myles. The teacher would not let him. As this fellow was leaving, he strutted across the front of the room, all hoity toity, shouting, 'Billy, Billy, the car-r-r is parked out in the back.' We all burst out laughing. That is my first memory of Billy Myles—a joke!

That fall was our freshmen year. We were in the same class again, and I drew Lorita's name for Christmas gifts. I gave her several gifts, but that was it, because when we became sophomores, I started dating another girl and we went together for about eighteen months.

After basketball season my junior year, I was smitten. Lorita's sorority was having a musical program and she asked me to buy some tickets. I told her, "I don't have the money now, but I can come over Saturday night to buy the tickets." Of course, that was a ruse. I had the money right in my pocket. I just needed an excuse to go over to her house. I was smooth. Now Lorita would tell you that the week before we had played a basketball game in Kansas City, Kansas. Lorita went with one of my friends, and they picked me up after the basketball game to bring me back to the school where I could get my car. Lorita sat in the front seat between the two of us, and when she said her hands were cold, I gave her my gloves. I was clueless. I did not think anything was going to happen. I mean, she was with my buddy. I just thought her hands really were cold.

The next week, the Friday night before I was supposed to go to her house, I went out with one of Lorita's girlfriends. This girl had sent me a note and I figured that any girl who went to such trouble, well, I should take her out. When I took the girl back home that night, she tipped Lorita's trump card. I did not know Lorita had her eye on me, but then her girlfriend said to me, "Lorita and I are going to stay friends regardless of who you choose. You're just going to have to make up your mind and choose one or the other of us."

I thought to myself right then, *Lorita Thompson likes me? Well, now, this isn't going to be a problem.* Of course, the next night I went over to Lorita's house. With two women liking me, I was feeling big and real good. I was strutting. All this time I had my eye on Lorita, and I did not even know she liked me. When I went over there Saturday night, I just floated down the street big time.

I went over to buy the tickets she was selling; and bought them with the same dollar bills I had in my pocket the day she asked me to buy them at school. That strategy worked, because when I got to her house, well, it took about three hours just to buy those tickets. As Lorita tells it, "He came over in that big white athletic sweater with the letters up and down the sleeves to impress me, and he did." Things took off from there, and on June 30, 2014, we celebrated our fifty-seventh wedding anniversary. My junior year was a good year.

The Quarter Miler: In the spring of my junior year, I ran track for the first time, under Coach Lenel Mason. Coach Mason had coached at Lincoln, down at the old building, in 1936. He was one of the teachers who marched up the big hill to the new Lincoln High; he had been around that long. Coach Mason coached football, basketball, and track—all in one year. He did it all and was head coach of everything. Coach Mason made athletics simple. He had been a great athlete himself. He never told us about it, but you could tell it from the things he could do, even though he was an older man at the time. He talked with a high-pitched voice, and he would say of our foul shooting, "I don't know why you can't make these." Then he would step to the line and fling free throw after free throw through the hoop. "I don't know why you can't do this. I'm an old man and I can," he would say. He would stand there just throwing one after the other in, all the while telling us that he didn't understand why we couldn't make them. He would show us how to do different things, and we would think to ourselves, *This old man can do it, and it looks so simple.*

Lenel Mason was a wonderful coach who taught me much more than techniques. He nurtured my thirst for history, a subject that I later would teach. When I was a student, I was always asking Coach Mason about the athletes before me, because he knew them all. He had coached Roy Miller and Jack Bush, who were giants in Lincoln High athletics. I was in kindergarten and Lenel had coached them. Roy Miller was a Kansas City Golden Gloves Champion who later went on to become a middleweight professional boxer. He was a stable mate to Henry Armstrong, the World Champion often regarded by the boxing community as one of the greatest fighters of all time. I knew of Roy Miller as a professional boxer, but Coach Mason told me about him being a powerful fullback at Lincoln High.

Coach Mason also told me about slew-footed runners, how part of your power is going in different directions, versus a guy whose feet are always going straight. Coach put a line down, and for the athletes whose toes pointed out, he showed us how part of your power was going to the outside; but if your feet point straight, all your power is going ahead. I do not know how many other men paid attention to that, but everything he said I was

gobbling up. Later, I will discuss how I used this knowledge to challenge the great Franco Harris.

When I went out for track, I thought, *Let's throw the shot put.* That sounded good. I was strong. Better yet, there was no running in the shot put. But Coach Lenel Mason said to me, "No one just throws the shot. You must run." I did not make it in the 100-yard trials, nor did I make it in the 220-yard trials; but I did make it in the 440, which meant I also had to run on the mile relay team. That was the toughest thing I ever had to do in sports. I would be sweating the first hour of school on the day of a track meet, just thinking about running those two 440s. This was only one challenge. A different challenge was Fairyland Park.

Fairyland Park: While there were many changes during my junior year, Fairyland Park was not one of them. Fairyland was an amusement park southeast of Kansas City, out at about 77th and Prospect. That spring, Fairyland was still for whites only. However, blacks did get to go to Fairyland the very first day the park would open. In late May or early June, black students were let out of school to visit the park; and that was their one and only day of the season to enjoy the park. Blacks could not go to the park during the rest of the summer. Whites only got use of the park during the other ninety to one hundred days that it remained opened. Lorita did not even get one day. Her mother and father said, "Man, they've just got us testing those things. If anything is wrong with the roller coasters, accidents are gonna happen that first day. They haven't been on those things all winter, so they just want us to see if they need fixing."

Of course, Lorita's parents were not the only ones who thought this way. Many parents would not let their children go the first day the park opened. It was too much like, "We'll let the blacks test the roller coasters. They are expendable, and if anything is wrong, then we will fix it." I can still hear some of the folks talking about that. "Zoom! There goes another one off the first turn," we used to joke. Nevertheless, I cannot remember anything ever going wrong. It was a big deal. They would let all the black grade schools and high schools out for half a day, and we all went to the white amusement park, even if it were just to test the roller coasters.

In the spring of 1953, as I tested those roller coasters, life was good and I was carefree. I was a four-sport athlete. We had broken the barriers of American Legion Baseball. I had a beautiful new girlfriend. There are times in life that I wish I could bottle. This was one of them. Unfortunately, I could not, and things were about to change again. Come fall, I would be a senior, and it would soon be time to start thinking about the transition to the new world that was waiting. Where would I go? What would I do? Who would I become? First, though, before I could answer these questions, there were some championships to win and honors to be earned.

Chapter 8

SPREADING MY WINGS

By the fall of my senior year, I had blossomed to 6 feet 2 inches and 203 pounds. This made a high school lineman stand out in those days. I was considered fast for my size, in that I ran a 51.7 quarter mile. I was also named co-captain. We would win the City Championship and I would be selected for All-State honors; but in my senior year I would also experience some other things that were important to my life's journey.

Every high school player idolizes certain colleges. Like most students, I liked the colleges around me. I grew up in what was then known as the Big 6 Country—Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa State, Kansas State, and Oklahoma. Colorado joined in '47, making it the Big 7. Three years after I graduated, Oklahoma State would come back in to make it the Big 8. I was in the heart of good football, and in my senior year, we were on the road.

On The Road Again: Our football team played games in five different states. In Missouri, we played Sedalia, Columbia, Joplin, and St. Louis Vashon. Over in Oklahoma it was Oklahoma City and Muskogee. In Kansas, it was Sumner in Kansas City. There was East St. Louis in Illinois. And down in Arkansas, we went to Little Rock Dunbar. Black schools had to travel far because in those days of segregation, we only played black schools. We would ride on a school bus to the schools in Missouri. When we went to Oklahoma City or Muskogee, or Little Rock, or East St. Louis, we would ride on a Greyhound-type bus. How many high school students experienced a motor coach to their games? This was a great adventure; but the best thing about the traveling was the caliber of athletes with whom I competed. In Oklahoma City, I played against Sherman White (later with the New York Jets) and the legendary Prentice Gautt of Douglass High School, who would become the first black to start for the University of Oklahoma. We became close friends as adults. Prentice arrived in Oklahoma in 1956, two years after I had started college. According to history, he was denied a scholarship his freshman year because Oklahoma supporters pressured Coach Bud Wilkerson. Instead, local black professionals purportedly donated money to the University in order for Prentice to attend without having to pay. That lasted until the end of one year, when the Sooners saw how he could run. Prentice was the nineteenth pick in the 1960 NFL draft and would go on to play seven seasons in the NFL, earn a doctorate, and serve as Assistant Commissioner for the Big Eight Conference.

At Little Rock Dunbar, I played against Jim Pace, who was a tremendous athlete. Jim became one of the earlier black players to play at Michigan, and in his time led the Big Ten in scoring. In 1957, he was their Most Valuable

Player and earned All-American honors. Jim would go on to play briefly in both the NFL and the Canadian Football League. Little Rock Dunbar also had a quarterback named Sidney Williams, who went to Wisconsin in the mid-fifties. Sidney was the first black quarterback, both at Wisconsin and in the Big Ten, and went on to earn a law degree and have a distinguished career in intellectual property law.

It is somewhat ironic. Because we could not play the white schools in our immediate area, we had to travel long distances to play other teams. Although racism was wrong, I benefitted by the outside experiences. Looking back, the traveling we did because of segregation resulted in my playing with high-level competitors. These great players challenged me as an athlete and prepared me for my college and professional career ahead. I would not have played against so many great athletes if my high school team had played only schools in my area. The external competitors were not only great athletes and football players—they were good men who made big contributions to society off the field, too. When you think of it, though, it makes sense. In those times, it took a special person to get an opportunity, to prove himself, to take the heat, and to be accepted. The black athletes who broke the barriers in the white colleges had to be a cut above, and the people I played against were. All because we had to travel. *The place I sought was seeking me.*

We beat Little Rock Dunbar in my time, but we never beat Oklahoma City or Muskogee. I cannot prove it, but I think Muskogee players competed for six or seven years. I know one player who played diagonally across from me when I was a sophomore. The next two years I played head up against the same person. In my senior year, after the game, I congratulated him and commented that our competition with each other was over. "No," he said, "I've got two more years." Now, I know that he had already been playing there for three years. Nevertheless, our trips were fun and rewarding in many ways. One of my rewards was related to food on our trips.

Boiled Eggs: On these long road games, we would just get on the bus and ride. Of course, we never stopped to eat. There was barely money for equipment, let alone food. I had a big box from the Palace Clothing Store. Back then, when Mother would buy clothes for us, they would fold up the suits and place them in boxes. I would fill a suit box with donuts, ham sandwiches, roast beef sandwiches, and other sundries and take it along on the bus. I would sell sandwiches for sixty-five cents. On the trip to the game, my teammates would buy everything I had and deplete my supply, so I would go in a store wherever we were, and buy food items for the return trip. My fellow players would be starving on the way back, and buy more of my food. I made good money. I sold hard-boiled eggs for a nickel each. My friend, Jim Buford, would help me sell food on the bus—that is until Coach made me stop selling boiled eggs. The athletes were eating the boiled eggs and breaking more wind than a cyclone coming through tornado alley. They were really stinking up the bus, and one night Coach barked, "Myles, no more eggs!" That was the end of the eggs and easy nickels. On trips back home, I often ran out of ham and roast beef; and all I had left was lunchmeat, which I sold at the same price as roast beef. This made my teammates mad. Hey! The law of supply and

demand is what it is. I did not create it. I guess it could be said that in addition to being a good football player, I was a real entrepreneur and a regular little hustler. There were other senior-year incidents that demonstrated that I was not perfect. One of these is discussed next.

Can't See It, Coach: I was a good kid, but not perfect. In our senior year, the athletes had seventh-hour gym, so we could start dressing for practice before school was out. We were actually starting practice during gym class.

Once a week we had swimming. Lincoln High had its own pool, and at that time we always swam naked—both at the Y and at school. Coach White had a game where he threw a whistle in the pool and players were supposed to jump in and get it, come up, and then blow it and count to ten. Of course, first all the water had to be blown out. This exercise helped to build the lungs.

One day in my senior year, Coach White threw the whistle in the pool, and nobody went after it. I was team captain and one of the larger athletes, so Coach said to me, "Hey, Myles get the whistle."

"Can't see it, Coach." As I said, I wasn't an angel.

He said, "You know you can see that whistle."

"Can't see it, Coach."

Then he asked Leroy to go get it.

"Can't see it, Coach," Leroy said.

Coach says, "You chickens," and whoosh, in he went after it.

When Coach came up, I was in the pool on top of him, just like that! Dunking him! It was just an impulse. He beat me off of him, and zoom! . . . here came Leroy . . . zoom! . . . here came John Bradley . . . zoom! . . . here came Charles Beamon. We almost drowned Coach. He finally got over to the side, and wheezed and threw up all kinds of water in the drain. Later on, I felt bad about what we did. It was dangerous and we could have hurt him. We should not have done that; but at the time, for a bunch of high school kids on an impulse, it seemed funny. After all, Coach created the activity.

Later on, after we completed high school, I went back and apologized. I told Coach White that he made me a man. He helped me with football, even after he was not coaching anymore, because he was still a teacher. Yet, in my senior year, we tried to get that man. We could have drowned him. As I said, I was far from perfect. Could it have been because he was a Michigan man, and the future and unknown Buckeye coach inside of me took over? Who knows my reason for revolting against Coach White. However, I do know the reason for the Jersey Revolt, which I will now reveal.

Jersey Revolt: I led the Jersey Revolt. The day of my very last Lincoln High football game, I was not sure I would ever get to take the field. These brand new jerseys came in just before the team's last game. The jerseys we had been wearing all season were old and ratty, but the administration decided to save the new ones until the next year. We protested, "This isn't right." Then, the other captain and I led a little revolt. We were down in the locker room, and one of the managers came by and noticed that Leroy and I were not dressing. At that point, he did not realize that no one was dressing. When we found out that the school was not going to let us wear the new uniforms, Leroy and

I told the team not to dress. So there the team sat. Well, wind of it must have gotten back to the coaches upstairs in their office. After a while, they told us to come to the equipment room. There, they started passing out all the brand new jerseys. That revolt was about the biggest rabble rousing I ever did in my high school career.

After we finally settled the jersey dispute, I got dressed, but I could not find my cleats. I had taken them home to polish them; and I forgot to bring them back to school. There I was, refusing to dress because of old worn-out jerseys, and then I come to find out I had no cleats. To get them, Leroy and I flew across town, in my Dad's station wagon, to get my cleats—wearing our uniforms. Of course, we were already running behind schedule because of the jersey deal. Nevertheless, we made it in time; and that afternoon, I played my last game as a Lincoln High Tiger. That game would mark the end of my high school football career. In the three years after I started playing, we won two city championships and I made All-State. While at Lincoln High, I also played a role in basketball. I served as an enforcer.

The Enforcer: During my senior year, I was a part-timer on the basketball court. Perry Kirkpatrick was my coach and we had a good relationship. Coach Kirkpatrick always had a football player out there as an enforcer. I was deeply interested in athletics, and I provided Coach that rebounder who was not going to be intimidated. I relished that role and no one was going to mess with our team. As a result, Coach liked me; and long past high school, he helped me in one of the biggest decisions of my life.

I was getting twelve to fifteen rebounds in a game; but I was only averaging four points, since I was in the game as a rebounder and enforcer. Because of that, one time I had a problem with Coach K. We lost a game. Afterwards, downstairs in the locker room, Coach was chewing us out, and said, "There is too big a difference between the first guy and the second guy. Now, the first man got twenty-seven but the second man only got thirteen. And it was Myles."

I sat there thinking to myself, *Coach, I'm only averaging four to six, and I got thirteen.* I did not say anything, but dadgum, my most points ever, and he was saying to the team, "The second guy only got thirteen and it was Myles." Shucks, I never again scored thirteen points in a basketball game, and there was Coach saying, "And it was Myles!"

In that year's black city championship game against R.T. Coles, I was fouled at the very end of the game. We were one point behind with something like four seconds left on the clock. I made the first free throw to tie the game. Then I made the second one to win it. Funny thing, it was the only two points I scored that night. That was the biggest thing I ever did in basketball—win a city championship.

The thing I remember most from my senior year, though, was being part of the first basketball game played in Kansas City between a black team and a white team. We played North Kansas City, which was a white school in another city. It was not the northern part of the bigger Kansas City. North Kansas City was a little city to itself, north of the big Kansas City, Missouri.

It was the first time blacks played against whites in a school basketball

game; but while growing up in Westport, I played with white guys all the time. Whites lived out that way and playing basketball is what we did. We played games in the neighborhood. So for me to play North Kansas City was not as big a deal as it was for them to play me. For most people in the area, it was a big deal for a black school and a white school to play against each other in a public game. Remember, this was still a period of racial segregation in America. About three months later, the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education,* was handed down against Topeka, Kansas, just sixty-one miles to the west. For the most part, blacks were still playing against blacks, and white schools were still playing against other white schools; so, for our black school to play their white school, in 1954, was still a big deal in Kansas City.

Our coaches and parents told us beforehand, "We don't want any fights, we don't want any of this, or any of that." They told us not to do anything bad, and I guess the North Kansas City parents had told their team the same. The first game was the most polite basketball game I ever played. During that game, everyone walked on eggshells. If my man made a move, I would step back and let him go around me. We would fake them, and they would step out of the way so we could go around them. Neither team wanted to cause any problems. There was a lot of easy scoring. North Kansas City won the first game at their place, and we won the second one at our place. At our place, we really got to playing basketball; but at that first game at their place, neither team wanted to cause any problems.

When they came over to our territory, it was a funny game. Of course, everyone was on edge. This was something new, especially for them to come into the black neighborhood. I think we shook up the North Kansas City kids at our place. Over at our gym, during the game, a few of our students started chanting, "You win the game, you lose the fight. You win the game, you lose the fight. You win the game, you lose the fight." It was just a few of our kids, but they were down front where the teams could hear them. Funny thing. All of a sudden, the North Kansas City players started missing shots, dropping passes, and all kinds of things went wrong. We won that game. As I explained, it was not that big of a deal for me. Still, you can imagine what it was like for the white folks to come to the black part of town. This was 1954 and that just didn't happen.

It was a start, though. In two years, my friend Mickey Smith would be a senior, and he would play basketball for the first time in the Kansas City Interscholastic League. Mickey would get to play all the white schools in Kansas City that I did not play because of racial segregation. Things were beginning to change, and I was right there at the divide, one foot in segregation, one in integration.

Look At Me! I was still on the track team my senior year, but that year I just threw the shot put, except in the very first meet. In that meet, Coach put me in the mile relay, just because I was standing around out there in my warm-ups. I soon got wise to that, and when I finished throwing the shot I would just take off my uniform. I would go in and dress so I did not have to run the mile relay. There was nothing that I hated more than to run the mile

relay. The hardest thing that a person can do is run the quarter mile. I mean, it is something else. The quarter is tough.

I had been second in the shot put at the Segregated State Meet in 1953 as a junior, and I won it as a senior. Of course, when I was second as a junior, we were just going to the Black State Meet. We were not going to the White State Meet, so I had beaten the black athletes—not the white. Then in my senior year, 1954, we got to go to the first integrated state track meet in Missouri's history. Blacks and whites competed in the same meet for the first time.

I had a great year throwing the shot prior to going down to the white state meet. Coach Mason added up our points on the bus ride down. "We're going to score here, we're going to do this, and we can put eight points in here for the shot put," he said. "Myles is going to take the shot." Coach said that on the ride down.

Well, we got there, and while we were all warming up, I was just throwing *way out there*. I was going to take it. Everybody was, "Ooh!" and "Ahh!" I had that crowd buzzing. I was just really showing off, just flinging the thing way out there. All those oohs and ahhs were getting to me and I just kept throwing and throwing in the warm-ups. I was really enjoying the limelight. Here I was throwing with the whites for the first time.

Then, when I threw in the actual game, I had no arm left. The guys said it looked like a bottle rocket that fizzled. I felt bad afterwards. Real bad. I had a chance to be a winner at a historic meet and I blew it. Even worse, I had let my team down because I was showing off. I did not do what I was supposed to, I did not get the points I was supposed to get. I did some things and had a little fun while I was there, but I did not win. I did not do what I was supposed to do, and everybody was counting on me. To this day, sixty years later, when we get together, the guys still talk about the "oohs! and ahhs!" that I got in warm-ups and then the egg I laid when it came time to throw. We laugh about it now, but it is still a shame. There we were—the blacks had waited all that time to get a chance in the white state track meet—and I blew the opportunity to take a medal that we should have won. Although it was a disappointment, a bright note followed when a new challenge opened.

Leaving the Nest: There was never one bit of question in the Myles home that I would go to college. The question was where? I had already decided to study physical education. Since kindergarten, I had known I wanted to be in athletics and to become a coach. It was fun to be in the gym. I tried it all. Tumbling. All the games. I never made anything but A's in gym classes. I was going to play, and when I got through playing, I was going to coach. The coaches at junior high, the YMCA, and the boxing club inspired me. They got paid for doing something that was fun. All my young life I wanted to do that. They were the men I admired. I thought they had it made. Teaching people how to play basketball or how to swim was a great job; and, of course, you had to teach to be a coach. Therefore, there was never a doubt in my mind about what I wanted to do. I was going to learn to teach physical education.

During my senior year in high school, my coaches wrote letters of recommendation for me and college recruiters visited me. Coach McCreay took an interest in me and was there for me when it came time to think about college.

The white schools had film then, but the black schools did not. This made it harder for black athletes to be recognized by college football coaches. Most blacks in those days enrolled in black colleges. However, Coach McCreay wrote letters of recommendation to integrated colleges for me. He helped me to get a scholarship. I owe a lot to James McCreay.

Coach Lee also wrote letters for me during my senior year. Although we did not beat Oklahoma City and Muskogee that year, we probably played those two teams as well as we ever played them. That helped me. We did beat Dunbar in Little Rock; and since they had outstanding players like Jimmy Pace and Sidney Williams on the team, that surely helped me, too.

I was a University of Missouri fan because I lived in "Mizzou." This is where I really wanted to go. There was only one problem. It was difficult for a black person to attend the University of Missouri then. There appeared to be an unwritten quota. You must remember: this was still segregated times and my own state university would not take me because I was black. Kansas State, which was in the Big 7 Conference then, did offer to admit me. However, the black colleges were the ones that really wanted me. Scholarship offers were coming from a lot of the black schools, such as Morris Brown College in Atlanta, along with some of the smaller schools in Kansas, and I had been invited down to Lincoln University, the historically black university in Jefferson City, Missouri.

Lincoln University had at the time Leo Lewis, who was nicknamed the "Lincoln Locomotive," and had scored more touchdowns than any other player in any college in history. Leo played halfback for Lincoln from 1951 to 1954, and I had seen him play Langston University in Blues Stadium, right behind my high school. He was another one of my boyhood heroes and this was another instance when I jumped the fence to get in to see him. Leo scored sixty-four touchdowns while he was at Lincoln U and eventually went on to the Canadian Football League. He was inducted into both the Canadian Football Hall of Fame and the College Football Hall of Fame. Minnesota Vikings Coach Bud Grant once described Leo as the best player he had ever coached.

I came to know Leo pretty well, and I was thinking about going down to Lincoln. Freshmen could play there, and wherever I was, whatever I did, I always wanted to be playing, to be in the game. Thus, I could go from Lincoln High to Lincoln University. We had the black state track meet and the black state basketball tournament down there, so I was familiar with the campus. During my college interviews, Lincoln U officials had me down to meet with the coaches and so forth. I liked it. My visit was great. I decided to go there.

There was one problem. I said I was going to Lincoln University, but my mother wanted me to go to a mixed school. Times were beginning to change, and my mother and father wanted me to go to an integrated school. They wanted me to have that experience. Then Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, offered me a scholarship. Mom and I rode up on the bus to visit. During the recruiting weekend at Drake, Coach Warren Gaer and the players impressed me. Eugene Hendrix, my teammate from Lincoln High, was already there. He was a great friend who looked out for me. In addition to the good impressions and the presence of a friend, the big thing that convinced me to

attend the college was the information that freshmen were eligible to play. On that visit, I decided to go to Drake.

People have often asked me why my mother wanted me to go to a mixed school. Well, it was simple. The world was not black. Mom was a very progressive woman. Further, *place,* was at work. We lived in this black Steptoe neighborhood in the midst of the white Westport community. I had played sandlot football with white kids. I had played sandlot basketball with white kids. We would play on their schoolyards in the summer. I became real close with some, and we would work out together in the summer during high school. I had played baseball in the American Legion with white kids. I was lucky. Though I went to a segregated high school, playing with whites was no big deal to me, as it might have been for other kids of my generation and time. *Place* was at work.

I picked Drake and I have never regretted it. Drake was good to me. After all, it took me when my own state university would not. People look back over my career now and tell me how lucky I have been. I tell them, "Shucks, I just got on the bus." When the time came to visit Drake, Mom and I just got on the bus and took the ride. That bus was right on time, and that has made all the difference.

The country changed in the five years between the time I left Lincoln High for Drake, and the time my youngest brother Phil followed me there in 1959. Phil did not have to go to segregated Lincoln High. Instead, he went to integrated Westport High in our neighborhood. Let me say again, Phil was captain of their football team. There were about three blacks and four hundred whites in Phil's class, and he was elected class president his senior year. That says a lot for Phil. It says a lot for Westport; and it says even more for the transition of the country, from a nation racially divided to one that respects and judges all people, in the words of Martin Luther King Jr., by "the content of their character."

It Takes a Village: Looking back now, I realize just how much my parents did to prepare me to go off to Drake University. "A man without an education is heading for a bad situation." If I heard that once from my father, I heard it ten thousand times. You gotta get your education, you gotta do this. That was understood from the beginning. The expectation was that we were going to set our own standards. Dad pushed that. He was a disciplined man, and he had high standards for his boys. Whatever we wanted to do, our parents pushed. When I got into athletics, they supported that. Dad got a membership in the YMCA for me, and I could take advantage of all that was offered. The YMCA, swimming, scouts, and camps kept me off the streets and into something positive.

Dad was scoutmaster; therefore, I had no choice but to become an Eagle Scout. It was just understood that I would make Eagle, would go to Baptist Training Unit, would play an instrument. I just had to do all these things that prepared me for the world. My father and mother got behind me and supported me. They came to games when I was a freshman and just getting started. They were still coming when I finished.

Whenever we did something, Dad would say he had seen better, he had

seen worse. It was his way. Of course, other people would tell us Dad bragged to everyone else about how we did. However, we never heard that. He would brag how John played the instruments, how Phil played the drums and tap danced. But to us, it was always, "Seen better, seen worse." Of course, he would tell us he was proud, even though he did not brag about us in our presence. He was always pushing us to be better.

I graduated from Lincoln High in the spring of 1954. In a sense the country graduated too, because at that same time, May 17, 1954, to be exact, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." The locked door was cracking open. Yet in achieving another rung on the ladder of opportunity that blacks had long sought to climb—opportunity that was much overdue—hindsight tells us we lost something, too. Still today, inner city schools struggle to achieve the promise of the landmark case that began just sixty-five miles west of where I grew up.

As I think back, I understand now how special a place our neighborhood and that era were. Even though it was a period of unequal opportunity, we were fortunate to be nurtured by caring parents, teachers, coaches, and people of the community. Many other blacks were not as fortune as we were. My lifelong friend and classmate, Robert Wedgeworth, now a nationally famous librarian, explained these positive circumstances to Steve Davis in an interview, which included the following:

> I got to know Bill when we went to Lincoln High. Bill was a year ahead of me, and we played basketball together. Bill was a gifted athlete that did everything. Football. Basketball. Track. He did them all.
>
> I became close with the entire Myles family. My senior year in high school, both my parents died of natural causes. Vera Myles couldn't have been more wonderful in my time of need. She invited me out every weekend. She was kind and understanding about what I was going through.
>
> Reflecting on our growing up, there are several things that come to mind. Bill has so much integrity and is so honest. If Bill tells you something, you can bank it. He has this incredible knowledge of sports in general, not just football. He has an in-depth knowledge, and a fantastic memory for special sporting events and sports figures. All this prepared Bill to be a coach and to motivate and inspire guys to pursue excellence.
>
> I went to Wabash College in Indiana, and then I earned my graduate degree at the University of Illinois. I was the University Librarian and professor at the University of Illinois. More recently, President Obama nominated me to serve on the library board of The Institute for Museum and Library Services as a part of the National Endowment for the Arts. Like Bill, I am a product of the black community of Kansas City during the '40s and early '50s.
>
> It's hard to explain what it was like to grow up in a segregated environment, because it makes it sound as if you were penned up somewhere. On the contrary, we had a complete community. We had

people who ran businesses in the neighborhoods; we had professional people. When racial integration occurred and people began to scatter, we lost that integral neighborhood we used to have. Now you have inner cities where there is nothing but poor people. When I was growing up, my parents were working people, but I went to school with the sons and daughters of doctors and lawyers and business people. There were lots of opportunities for young [black] children to learn from older people who were active in our community. But when the communities were integrated, of course, those of better means moved away. It left just the people who couldn't afford to live anywhere else.

Our parents shielded us from a lot of the negative things that occurred in a segregated environment. In the downtown stores, they didn't have the restroom labels like the South, but there were still places where you couldn't use those restrooms. So my parents always made us go to the bathroom before we ever went downtown. Even though our parents shielded us, we grew up very much aware that we were restricted from doing certain kinds of things.

I remember one *New York Times* reporter writing that segregated schools were inferior and the teachers not as prepared. I wrote her. "You can't make a blanket statement like that," I said. Our Lincoln high school was built in the 1930s and was a very fine physical plant. We had marble terrazzo floors. We had an indoor swimming pool, a full-fledged auditorium. Our math teacher had a master's degree from the University of Kansas, our English teacher had a PhD from the University of Chicago. We had another teacher who had a master's from Yale. Of course, most of those people were there because they couldn't teach anywhere else! Obviously that situation didn't exist in all segregated schools, especially in the Deep South. As Bill has often said, *'The place you seek is seeking you.'* It was partly the luck of the draw that *place* played such a great part in our lives, because it didn't for many black youth of our generation.

Our teachers knew that they were preparing us for export. They knew that Bill and I would grow up in a world that they didn't know. So they tried their best to prepare us for that. It was generally understood that it was not good enough for us to be as good as the next white person. We had to be better, because we knew we weren't going to get an even break. That was the environment we grew up in, and the kind of preparation we had.

We had our own amusements. I was asked to give a program at Wabash College about the Negro Leagues. It was a part of my life. I knew Satchel Paige. I saw Jackie Robinson play. I knew Hilton Smith very well, but as the father of one of my basketball teammates more than as a star Monarchs pitcher who would be inducted into Cooperstown. When Bill or I went to a double header on Sunday, we were not just seeing distant personalities, these were people who were very much part of the community. Our community was one with its own entertainment, its own social events, and its own political activities.

It is complex to describe growing up in our racially segregated

community, because for the most part we did not have to have any interaction with the outside world. We read about it in the newspapers every day, we heard about it on the radio, and then of course when our brothers and fathers went off to WWII, they brought back what was going on in the outside; but on a day-to-day basis, we lived in fully functional communities.

Bill was fortunate to grow up in Westport. He was fortunate to have the teachers I have described. He was fortunate to come along when opportunities were starting to open.

We were all fortunate but it was not entirely accidental. When I lost my parents, that support system—my counselors, Mrs. Myles, my teachers—worked for me. I could have easily been one of the lost ones. There were lots of those. I can think of other people I went to high school with and say, "There but for the Grace of God go I." It just wasn't entirely accidental. We had these people who were doing their best to prepare us for whatever opportunities presented themselves. It just so happened that when those opportunities came, many of us were prepared to take advantage of them.

Admittedly, there were those who didn't have the Vera Myles, the William Myles Sr., who didn't have the association with Bill's family. There were also those who didn't really appreciate the uphill climb that we were going to have to make. One of my classmates was one of the smartest guys in my high school. We were sitting in his kitchen one day while he was telling me he wasn't going to college, that he was going to join the Navy. He was tired of school and wanted to see the world. I told him I was going to college because that was the best way to better my life. Here was a young man who had parents who pushed him, pushed him to do his homework, pushed him to follow the golden rule. He had strong support from his teachers. But he simply didn't have that willingness to move ahead in a direction that would give him a better life. We can all cite examples of people who had talent, but didn't use it.

We all had to make sacrifices as we went away. As I said, "We were educated for export." I knew going into Central Indiana in the mid-fifties that I wasn't going into a garden spot of integration, but I was prepared to deal with it, just as Bill was prepared to deal with situations when he went to Drake. Our teachers and our village that raised us had prepared us for just that.

As Robert said, "We were prepared for export." So exported we were. My teammate and best friend, James Buford, had headed to Tennessee State after graduating in '53. In the fall of '54, I was off to Drake University and Des Moines, Iowa, about to embark on a new and very different leg of my journey. There was a new world waiting out there.

Chapter 9

A DIFFERENT WORLD

In August of 1954, at the age of seventeen, I left the comfort of Westport and headed to Drake University. Fortunately, Eugene Hendrix was already at Drake; and when he left Kansas City for fall camp, I rode up with him. My experiences at Drake would be unique because when I arrived in Des Moines, it would be the first time that I had ever been on a mixed team. My entire life had consisted of playing on black teams, and the integrated Drake team that I joined would be a new experience. My friend Eugene also enjoyed new experiences. One of them was his friend, Judy.

Judy: On the way up, Hendrix kept telling me about this Judy Johnson. Judy this, Judy that. Judy was built. Judy was something! Well, being a red-blooded teenage boy heading off to college for the first time, I thought to myself, *Boy, when I get there, I'm going to talk to this Judy gal. She must be the thing. I can't wait to meet her.* Well, we got there and went over to Judy's house. When Judy came out, well, Judy was a guy! I mean, Judy was built like a Greek God, rippling muscles everywhere, and he said, "Hello, Bill." For over two hundred miles, I had been sitting in the car, thinking, *When I get there I am going to make a good impression on this Judy gal.*

At the time, I did not know about Judy Johnson the baseball player. I had never met a man named Judy. Judy Johnson was a great third baseman with the Pittsburgh Crawfords, one of the best in the Negro Leagues. In 1975, he was the sixth Negro Leaguer inducted into the Hall at Cooperstown. I did not know that then, because Johnson retired from the Negro Leagues in '37, the year after I was born.

The Judy at Drake, though, actually turned out to be Norman. His name was Norman Johnson, but they nicknamed him Judy because, like Judy Johnson the baseball player, Norman too was a great athlete. He told me that he was actually my cousin. Norman had played with Johnny Bright, the greatest player in the history of Drake. Norman had planned to play for the Los Angeles Rams that year until he had to have knee surgery. Getting hurt was part of the game.

Hurt Already? The Drake players were all very good to me; but as a seventeen-year-old freshman, living in 1954, I had to make some adjustments. Taping was one. I did not know about taping ankles. In our high school a player did not get taped unless he was hurt. Of course, our high school did not have tape. The first night I was in camp at Drake, the coach

was talking, and then the trainer got up and said, "If you get taped, we start taping tomorrow morning a couple of hours before practice."

I leaned over to Hendrix, and I asked, "Somebody's hurt already?"

"No," he answered, "They tape you up here regardless. Tape your ankles twice a day, even for practice."

After Hendrix said that, I replied, "Shucks, at Lincoln we had to sneak around and get tape just to hold up our socks, and this trainer is talking about taping and nobody's even hurt."

I quickly realized that I was in a different world. I was not taped that day because I had never been taped and I figured I could use another half-hour of sleep before practice.

Drake's preseason practice was at Camp Dodge, an Army Camp ten to twelve miles northwest of Des Moines. Coach started out the first day introducing the people, the rules, what we would have to do, and all that. There were only three blacks on the team: myself, Hendrix, and Ron Nelson. Hendrix and Nelson were both juniors. Before fall camp was over, one other black athlete, Acy Chandler, joined the team. There were four of us and we roomed together.

Camp was so tough that at night some of the team members left. It was a long way back to Des Moines—much too far to walk—so some caught a ride with the milkman. Camp was a little rough on me, too. Growing up, I had never been sick. I did not have mumps or other diseases that young children get; but I did suffer from hay fever. Sleeping out in the country in late summer led to bad hay fever my first year at Drake. I knew that the other team members were upset with me because I kept them up all night with my sneezing and honking. Because my hay fever kept me awake, I watched some of the players as they left at 3 o'clock in the morning. I saw them get on the milk truck as it left after the delivery. They did not want anyone to know that they were quitting, so they would leave in the middle of the night. Drake was for the tough and the best like Johnny Bright.

Johnny Bright: Warren Gaer was head football coach at Drake University. Coach Gaer had been an outstanding fullback at Drake in the '30s. His claim to fame was coaching Johnny Bright, whom he brought to Drake from Fort Wayne, Indiana. Johnny had played at Drake in '49, '50, and '51.

Drake was in the Missouri Valley Conference for basketball but not football. Drake had withdrawn from the Missouri Valley in football because Johnny Bright's jaw was broken down in Stillwater against Oklahoma A&M in 1951. It was an incident with national repercussions. Three years had passed when I arrived at Drake, but I was still hearing about it, and it was fifty-four years before it was finally put to bed in 2005.

Johnny Bright was a star halfback and quarterback. Johnny was also black. In 1949, Drake had played Oklahoma State (then called Oklahoma A&M Aggies) and Johnny had been the first black to play at Lewis Field. Johnny was only a sophomore and that game was without incident.

However, when Drake returned in 1951 things had changed. Johnny, by then in his senior season, was leading the nation in total offense. He was considered a preseason Heisman Trophy candidate. Drake went into Stillwater,

Oklahoma, on October 20, 1951, riding Johnny's play to a five-game winning streak. Bad luck struck and Johnny was knocked unconscious three times in the first seven minutes of that game by blows from an Oklahoma A&M player. The final one broke his jaw, forcing Johnny out of the game. It was the first time in his Drake career that Johnny finished a game with less than one hundred yards, and Drake lost that game 21-14.

The day after the game, a sequence of photos capturing the incident was published in *The Des Moines Register*. The photos by John Robinson and Don Ultang showed the jaw-breaking blow was thrown to Johnny's face well after he had handed off, and several yards behind the play. In the photos, Johnny could be seen standing relaxed and unprotected when the clenched fist came unsuspecting from the side. Of course, at that time the helmets worn did not have any face protection. The photos were eventually published in *Life Magazine*; and in 1952 the article won Robinson and Ultang a Pulitzer Prize. Today those photos can be seen on the Drake University Library Heritage Collection website.

The incident gained national attention ten days after the photos were taken, when a *Register* reporter published a description of the incident and quoted people saying that prior to the game Oklahoma A&M reportedly had practiced "Getting that nigger." When I got to Drake, the story was that people had been taking bets in the barbershops of Oklahoma that Johnny would not make it through the first half.

When Oklahoma A&M and the Missouri Valley Conference refused to discipline the offending player, both Drake and Bradley University withdrew from the Conference. In the early 1980s, shortly before his death, Johnny would look back without bitterness and comment, with some pride, on how the incident had forced the NCAA to step in and clean up some things that were wrong. The incident was put to rest at last on September 28, 2005, when Oklahoma State President David Staidly formally apologized in a letter to Drake University.

Johnny Bright went on to finish fifth that fall in the Heisman Trophy voting, after missing several games. He was drafted by the Philadelphia Eagles in the first round. Instead, he chose to go to the Canadian Football League, saying he would have been the Eagles' first black player and he was not sure how he would be received. He retired as the CFL's all-time leading rusher and was inducted into the Canadian Football Hall of Fame. Johnny Bright was to Canadian Football what Jim Brown was to the NFL; and one wonders, but for that incident, how big a star Johnny could have been in our own NFL. One can also wonder what would it have done for Drake University to have a Heisman Trophy winner?

I played with Johnny in the alumni games at Drake, and spent time with him when he would come back to Des Moines. He is the greatest athlete that ever played for Drake. Johnny died of a heart attack on the operating table, at age fifty-two, during surgery to correct an injury from his football days. Today the stadium at Drake is named the Johnny Bright Stadium.

During my freshman year at Drake, I got a taste of bodily injury, too; and the blood flowed.

Blood: At seventeen, I was the youngest player on the Drake team. One day the coach said to me that if I wasn't so young, I could probably play a little more. I remember Hendrix taking up for me and smarting back, "What's he got to be to play, twenty-one?" Things went along pretty good, until one day in practice I got a bit of a bloody nose. We did not have facemasks at the time, and when I got the bloody nose, I just smeared it over my face. Coach Gaer started calling me "Young Blood." Later my teammates shortened it to "Blood," and now, sixty years later, when I go back to reunions, it is still Blood! Nobody calls me Bill at Drake University. They still remember the name Blood, and it is always Blood this and Blood that. Bob Schnarr was a big tackle on one of my teams who received a pharmacy degree from Drake and became a pharmacist in Illinois. Later, when OSU would go to Champaign to play the Illini, we would be taking the field and someone would yell, "Blood." I knew that it was Bob Schnarr from Drake.

Hugging Air: Our first game during my freshman year was against the University of Colorado. We went out to their place at Boulder in those magnificent mountains. What a venue for a seventeen-year-old kid from Kansas City to experience his first college game. Colorado had a real good guard, John Wooten, who later would block eight seasons for Jim Brown and the Cleveland Browns. The Buffaloes had another great player who has become the answer to a popular trivia question: "Who is the only guy to play in both the NFL and pinch hit for Ted Williams?" Carroll Hardy is the answer to that trivia question. Colorado ran a single wing, and a junior by the name of Carroll Hardy was their outstanding starting tailback.

Not only did Carroll Hardy pinch hit for Williams, he was the only player ever to pinch hit for him. On September 20, 1969 in the final days of his career, Williams fouled a ball off his foot and Hardy came in to finish his at-bat. Eight days later at Fenway Park, in his final major league game at bat, Ted Williams hit a home run. It was his trademark shot. After he rounded the bases, Williams refused, as he always did, to come out of the dugout and tip his hat to the fans. Then, the Red Sox manager let him go out to left field at the top of the ninth. Then he replaced him with Hardy to give the slugger the ovation he deserved. Hardy later remembered the ovation by saying, "They booed me all the way out, and cheered him all the way in."

Williams never appeared in another game. That final home run in Fenway was his last ever at bat. John Updike captured the poignant moment in an essay for *The New Yorker* titled "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu," one of the great sports columns in American journalism. An excerpt follows:

> Like a feather caught in a vortex, Williams ran around the square of bases at the center of our beseeching screaming. He ran as he always ran out home runs—hurriedly, unsmiling, head down, as if our praise were a storm of rain to get out of. He didn't tip his cap. Though we thumped, wept, and chanted 'We want Ted' for minutes after he hid in the dugout, he did not come back. Our noise for some seconds passed beyond excitement into a kind of immense open anguish, a wailing, a cry to be saved. But immortality is nontransferable. The papers said

that the other players, and even the umpires on the field, begged him to come out and acknowledge us in some way, but he never had and did not now. Gods do not answer letters.

Williams was immortal, and Carroll Hardy was his backup and a sub for him as he exited the grand stage.

In the days leading up to our game with Colorado, Coach Gaer kept telling us about this Carroll Hardy. They kept talking about Hardy as if he were a ghost or something. I was a freshman, away from home, out in the big world, feeling my oats, and I convinced myself, "Carroll Hardy hasn't seen Billy Myles yet" On the way to Boulder, I was getting my mind together. I told myself that I was going to show this Carroll Hardy something. While I did not start that game, I did get in for a few plays. Hardy came at me and made a move. I reached for him, went to wrap him, and all I was doing was hugging my numbers. I swear I touched him some kind of way, but Carroll had already been there and gone. He ran in and out of my arms that day; and the only thing I did was grab air. That was my initiation to college and to an NFL-caliber running back. They whipped us that day, just the way Carroll whipped me. We went on from there, and we did not have a very good year. We won a couple of games, but we did not do much and we gave up a bunch of points.

The next year I was moved from tackle to starting center and linebacker—Athletes had to play both ways then. We had no real weight program other than winter conditioning and running. Still I had blossomed to 228 pounds. Drake had run the single wing, but when I arrived the T-formation was coming into vogue. I recall some memorable games. We played North Texas State with Abner Haynes, who became an all-time, All-AFL second teamer. We played Bradley University over at Peoria, Illinois and Wichita State, who beat us bad. I intercepted a pass that game but I had too far to go for a touchdown. I intercepted on our thirty-five, and I got to about their twenty-yard line, thinking I was going to score. It did not happen. It was near the end of the game, and I ran out of gas. The bear just jumped on my back, and they caught me.

We had a couple of big games, including beating Bradley 51-47. It was a basketball score. Then we went out to play Boston College in Massachusetts. Many schools in that area had cancelled games, thinking a hurricane was coming. Not ours. People were standing in the tunnel when we came out, and one person said, "These guys have to be fools to play in this."

I remember thinking, "You're the fool. You came on your own. I had to come; they brought me out here. You're here on your own, buddy." I also remember being in the shower after that game. We were real muddy. A white teammate, whom I liked and who was a good friend, looked at me and said, "Blood, I look at you and can't tell where the mud stops and you begin." I really liked this guy, and he was joking about it, but when I looked down at my leg it was true. You could see a little white skin on the white player's muddy legs, but the mud mixed so well with my skin, it was hard to determine where the mud stopped on my legs.

To this day, though, the game I remember is beating Iowa State. At that time they were a Big 7 school and a natural rival since they were only

thirty-five miles north of us. We won that game, 27-21. Beating a major conference school was so big that Drake cancelled classes the following Monday. It was that big a victory for Drake University to beat a Big 7 team.

Things were good at Drake, although there was one incident that I shall not forget.

Ya Can't Stay Here: I was treated very well by my teammates at Drake, even though it was the mid-fifties and just the start of integration. One incident, though, lingers in my memory to this today.

In 1956, my junior year, we went down to play North Texas State in Denton, Texas. After we arrived and got off the bus, we went into the team hotel. We were all waiting around to get our room assignments when someone came over and told us—my roommate and me—that we could not stay there. Blacks were not allowed. I can remember different teammates coming over and saying, "We're not going to stay here, either. This is wrong."

It was an embarrassment. It did not bother me so much not being able to stay there, but I had a long time getting over Drake's failure to warn me in advance. They could have told me before we went down there. I would still have gone and participated in the game. I would not have refused to go. Perhaps they were worried about my willingness to go, if I had been told about a possible racial problem with hotel accommodations. If I had known in advance, I just would not have gone into that hotel to be embarrassed. Drake officials ended up taking the black players across town, where we stayed with a family since we were not allowed to stay at that hotel. I was in good company. Oscar Robertson, when he was with Cincinnati, went down there and I am told he had that same problem. Further, I hear Elgin Baylor had some problems there. I think Bill Russell might have had some problems there, too, or somewhere near there. I hope that Drake did not know what was going to happen until we got there. As I have said, Drake has been good to me. It bothered me more as I got older, more than it did at the time. Still, I was embarrassed that day.

Things were different then. The black players on the Iowa State team that we beat had to go thirty-five miles down to Des Moines for a haircut, since there was not a barber in Ames that would cut their hair. One of my Drake teammates, Bob Schnarr, tells interviewer, Steve Davis, a similar story that sums up race in that era:

> I grew up in Mason City, Iowa, and came from a unique white-black community. Our black people, I thought, were pretty well treated, but when I got to Drake, I found out that wasn't exactly the case. It was the fifties, and all black athletes and students, like Bill, had to carry some burdens that I as a white person did not have to bear.
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> I remember one incident as an example. Up by the basketball arena, there was a barbershop. I walked by one day and lo and behold, there was Sterling Macer cutting hair. Sterling Macer was black, and he and I had played football together back at Mason City. I went in and chatted with him. We talked quite a bit and as we finished, I said to him, "I'll send you some business." Sterling thanked me for that.

One day we were in somebody's room talking. The guys were all black but me, though I was well accepted by them. They were talking about discrimination on the campus.

"What do you mean discrimination?" I asked them.

"Well, we can't get a haircut anywhere," they told me. "We have to go way downtown."

"The hell you do," I told them. "You just go right down on Forest Avenue and go in and see my friend, Sterling Macer. Tell him that I sent you."

They started doing that, but it wasn't long before Sterling came to me. "Bob, you gotta quit sending them here," he told me.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"This is a white barbershop," Sterly said. "It's running off some of the white customers because the black guys are all coming in here. It just so happens I went to a white barber college and that is what I learned to cut. I know what you're trying to do, but don't do me any favors because I may end up losing my job!"

Drake and Des Moines weren't any worse than most other places of that era. In fact, it was a large degree better. I don't think the teammates that Bill played with treated him different than anybody else. We all were teammates; we all worked together. Still, that story of a simple haircut illustrates the times, and what Bill and blacks of his generation had to tolerate and overcome.

In spite of the uncomfortable racial events, there were many good events, one was the Relays.

Relays: Drake was also home to the Drake Relays. First started in 1910, the Relays are one of the premiere track and field events in the United States. Many Buckeyes have competed there over the years, including of course our own Jesse Owens and Butch Reynolds. During the 1950s, the Relays were a big deal. At that time, you would go to the Texas Relays, then to the Kansas Relays, and then the last weekend in April it was always either the Drake Relays or the Penn Relays. Those were the premier events. A lot of great runners ran there. Al Oerter, the four-time Olympic gold medal winner, was there throwing the discus. I saw Florida A&M with Bob Hayes, billed as the World's Fastest Man. I saw Texas Southern run against Florida A&M and Bob Hayes anchored them to victory. I can remember seeing the Olympian Hayes Jones run the hurdles.

I also saw the Olympian sprinter Bobby Morrow lose the hundred-yard dash to an athlete from Duke, Dave Sime. He was so fast that during one year, the Duke football coach put him in the first game of the season against Notre Dame. The first play from scrimmage, Sime caught a touchdown pass. The next time Duke got the ball, he caught another touchdown pass. Duke went on to beat Notre Dame. It was a huge upset.

I remember seeing Ron Kramer, the great Michigan athlete, high jump at the Relays and throw the shot put. I just saw a lot of athletes come to the Drake Relays, and I watched how the great ones competed.

The thing I remember most about the Relays was not an event, but rather

the clinic. The Relays were held on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. There was also a clinic on Friday. Since I wanted to coach, when I happened upon that clinic, I listened in. The coaches were in there talking about Bob Hayes, and how Bob Hayes did everything wrong. As I said, Bob Hayes at the time was billed as the "World's Fastest Man," but according to these coaches, his technique was all wrong. He was pigeon-toed, his foot was wrong, his fist was coming across his body, and they kept talking about how he did everything wrong. I can remember to this day, Coach Eaton, the Kansas track coach, finally saying, "Well, I don't know about all that, but whatever he is doing, he is beating everybody. And if he keeps on setting world records every time he runs, we're going to teach our boys at Kansas to run just like that." He continued, "Maybe Bobby Hayes knows something we don't know."

I thought that was one of those little jewels of coaching wisdom, and I have carried it with me ever since. Still, there was another perfect fit.

Perfect Fit: Drake and Coach Gaer were the perfect fit for a kid with my upbringing. I think that at one time Coach Gaer wanted to be a minister. Most of all, I respected him because he was a man of principle. He did not use profanity. I had grown up all my life without profanity; using profanity did not show toughness to Bill Myles. When I went to Drake, though, I was surprised at how many players cursed on the practice field. This did not happen at Lincoln High. Coach would get all over a player for cursing. Occasionally, the Lincoln High coach could be heard using a bad word, but not players. At Drake, it was different; and it was an eye opener for me. This was the first time I had played with a team of players who would get hit and get up cursing and swearing.

Coach Gaer never used profanity, though. His idea of talking rough was to say, "I'll knock you high as Gaylof's barn door." Before games, he would say, "I want you to go out of here frothing at the mouth and a-chomping at the bit." He talked like a farmer. I was sitting in there thinking, *What the heck is Gaylof's barn door?* He was talking about cows and stuff, and these farm boys would get all worked up. I would ask myself, *what the heck is going on*? I would sit there and think, *When is he going to give us the pep talk?*

Gaer was a good man, and we meant a lot to each other. It takes a special person to coach at a private college. It is a hard job, and different. Years later, on two different occasions, I was asked back to receive two of the highest awards one can get from Drake. Coach Gaer traveled to Des Moines both times to be in the audience.

Coach Gaer had some great assistants. Ralph Stewart was line coach. I do not remember seeing Ralph smile during the whole time that I knew him. Ralph was tough, but he did not talk tough. He did not have to because he was tough. Twice in my career, Ralph told me I played a good game. Now, when Ralph Stewart told someone that he played a good game, he did not need to say it, because everybody in the world knew it. If he ever told a player that he had a good one, the player really did the thing that day. I learned a lot about line play from Ralph Stewart, including coaching insights I would go on to use when I coached at high school, Nebraska, and Ohio State.

Gene Felker coached our ends. He had been a good player at Wisconsin

and then with the Packers. Gene was a solid coach. He developed Drake's famous end, Jerry Mertens, who started all four years that I was at Drake and then played defensive back for eight seasons with the 49ers. Drake had good coaches and good ballplayers. The only thing it was missing was Mom's fried chicken.

Fried Chicken: I had many friendships with the guys in the trenches at Drake University. Probably none was closer than my friendship with Bob Schnarr, who insisted on relating his version of our camaraderie to Steve Davis:

> I first met Bill Myles at Drake University. We spent time together working out, and on trips our football team took. When you play football together, you get to know people. You learn their integrity, and if they are a positive influence on your life. Bill was always one that you wanted to be around, always full of good energy, of good things. He believed in his religion very strongly. He was proud of his parents, his family, his school, and of where he grew up. Anyone around him could immediately tell he was consumed with love, a passion for the right things in life, and a desire to make himself a success by hard work.
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> That was Bill's motto, and you could sense that was the way it was going to be. Bill's work in athletics has been his life. There are a lot of "doesn'ts" with Bill Myles. Doesn't play golf, doesn't fish. Doesn't do woodworking. Doesn't cuss, doesn't swear, doesn't smoke, doesn't drink. Doesn't put anything above his wife, his family, his church, or his love of God, school, community, and mankind. Those are the things Bill is wrapped up in; those are the things that are important to him.
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> Bill is like a brother to me. One time we were coming back from Wichita on the train. It was to come into Kansas City, be detached, and at a certain time in the morning, they would wake us and transfer us to another train going to Des Moines. Bill came to me and asked, "Would you like to have breakfast at my house? We have this layover, and we are going to get up early and have breakfast. You wanna come?"
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> Bill got me and three other guys up early that next morning. His parents picked us up, and off we went to the Myles home. When we arrived, I had never seen a home full of so much love in all my life. His family was all over him, like a tent. They could not get enough of him. Finally, they asked him what he wanted for breakfast.
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> "I want Mom's fried chicken," Bill answered.
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> So at six o'clock on a Sunday morning, at 43rd and Broadway in Kansas City, Missouri, Vera Myles fried up a bunch of chicken and all the amenities for five big, hungry Drake football players. It was a moving display of love, to the point that I was actually jealous. You see, I had been kicked out of my own house when I graduated from high school because I wanted to go to college. My stepmother said, "No, you get a good job at State Brand Creameries, and pay us to live here."

"I can't," I said, "I don't have that kind of money. I need it to go to college." One day I got home from work and all my clothes were outside on the back stoop. I have been on my own ever since. I had to get to college on my own, so I went to Mason City Junior College first, became All-State, and won a football scholarship to get to Drake.

I didn't have in my life what I saw in the Myles home that day. I didn't see black. I didn't see white. I just saw love. I had never seen such love given to a son, and it was so genuine. I saw a family with so much tenderness that it affected me so deeply, and I sat there thinking, "Gee, I wish I had this."

I have recounted this story, and how jealous I was, many times. I will never forget that day, and the outpouring of love and dignity and respect with which Bill's family treated me. It was unbelievable. I was never so proud in all my life than to be a part of that particular breakfast, and that feeling will always be with me. I think Bill probably knew that I was on my own when he invited me, and it was his way of picking me up, of giving me some help in the way of a family life that I didn't have. I graduated from Drake in pharmacy, became somebody, had my own drugstores, and have since strived to give my own family the love and affection demonstrated to me that day—by a mother who loved her son enough to fry chicken at six in the morning. I have been a friend of the Myles [family] ever since.

I was in a great situation at Drake. Good school. Good coach. Good teammates. What more could I want? Well, there was one other thing. It was tugging at me, as Coach Hayes used to say, "stronger than the Transatlantic Cable." Of course, what was tugging was one young and pretty coed—Lorita Jane Thompson—who was 650 miles away in Wilberforce, Ohio. By Christmas of my sophomore year, something had to give. It did.

Chapter 10

DRIFTING

That freshman year when I had headed off to Drake, Lorita Jane Thompson had gone in the other direction, to Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio. We decided to cool our relationship for a while since we were going in different directions; however, I have learned over the years that it is smarter to let Lorita tell her version of the story:

> When we left for college, we broke up at Bill's suggestion because he thought, "The field is going to be greener there." Bill left early for practice, and after a while, he wrote a letter saying, 'Things are great—it's football and eating.'
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> I wrote back and said, 'You must be in heaven because football and eating are what you like to do.' When I got to college, I wrote Bill a letter—just a friendship letter—with my new address. I soon got a letter back. It was an inch thick. He began writing me every day. He had completely changed his mind about how green the grass was.

The next year, 1955, our sophomore year in college, Lorita and I became engaged at Christmas. In our junior year I called her from Drake about setting a wedding date. She wanted to be married the last Sunday in June. We wrote letters to our parents to tell them our plans. Soon the phone lines were buzzing. We were married on June 30, 1957. Our parents gave us a big wedding—the pictures and story covered two or three pages in the *Kansas City Call*. Still, on our wedding night, we had to stay across the river in Kansas City, Kansas, because hotels on the Missouri side did not accept blacks yet.

After the wedding, Lorita went with me back to Des Moines for the summer. We had an apartment, and I worked at the playground. When the fall semester began, Lorita went back to Central State at Wilberforce to finish work on her degree and graduate the coming January, while I stayed at Drake for my senior year; but financial needs led to quitting before my senior year was completed.

Quitting: After Lorita left for Central State, I started football practice and played in the first game before classes started. Sometime between that Saturday and the following Monday, it hit me. "All my money's going out and nothing is coming in," I told myself. "I'm newly married. I have a wife to support. I love her. She is somewhere else." So I quit. I quit football. I quit school. It was one of the few times that Bill Myles ever quit anything. I did not tell

my parents about it, but they found out when my brother John returned to Drake for the start of classes.

I could not live off the summer job I had, so I worked in a jewelry store in Des Moines. Daniels Jewelry was a retail store, with a mail order operation and catalog outlet named Ardan. We supplied all the jewelry to the three Daniels Jewelry stores—two in Des Moines, and one in Sioux City, Iowa.

Mr. Daniels was a Jewish fellow who treated me very well. My job was in inventory and pricing. One time I made a trip from Des Moines up to the store in Sioux City. Now, Des Moines is in the middle of Iowa, whereas Sioux City is in the northwestern part of the state. At the same time I was driving up there, a guy named Charlie Starkweather was on a murder spree in the Midwest, and that news was gripping the country. Starkweather had killed numerous people in Lincoln, Nebraska. He and his girlfriend, Caril Ann Fugate, were on the run, killing people across the state. They murdered eleven people, including a two-year-old child. It was a horrific, evil killing spree.

I considered myself a tough guy, but there I was, twenty-one years old, alone, and carrying a load of valuable jewelry in the area where Starkweather was on the loose. The entire way I kept telling myself, *If I see Starkweather, I'm just gonna run over him. Bam! I'm just gonna run right over top of him.* I was peeking in the mirrors, peering around every curve, passing anyone along the side of the road with trepidation. I kept telling myself, *No sir, ole Charlie Starkweather is not going to stop this young man with a car full of expensive jewelry. No, sir. I'm just running right over him. Ker-thump! Ker-thump!*

Well, I did not run into Starkweather, of course. He was eventually captured, and later executed at the Nebraska State Penitentiary. However, that was not the end of his story. Starkweather is said to be the basis for some of Stephen King's work, and several movies, including *Natural Born Killers, Starkweather,* as well as the 1993 TV movie *Murder in the Heartland.* I should have written to the producers of those films and suggested that they cast a scared-to-death twenty-one-year-old ferrying a load of expensive jewelry.

Lorita graduated when the fall semester ended, and rejoined me in Des Moines where she taught school during the winter and spring. It was so cold in Iowa—with twenty-one straight mornings that were fifteen below or colder that winter—that Lorita did not want to stay there. We found out in the spring just how cold it had been when Lorita discovered she was expecting our first child. That fall, on Halloween of 1958, our daughter Debora Renee was born. We lived in Des Moines one more winter before moving back to Kansas City in the spring of 1959.

When we settled back in Kansas City, I went to work for *The Call,* the black Kansas City paper. I applied to be a sports writer but they already had one; so instead, J. Ruben Benton hired me to sell ads. I was selling ads like you couldn't believe. I really worked for them. They told me I would get a $50 per week draw, and after so many ads, a percentage of the ads I sold. I was hustling. Boom! I snagged one. Boom! I signed up another. I was really bringing in ads. Everyone was buying. I was thinking to myself, *Man this is it. Bill Myles, you're making some good money.* I had some steady customers signed for fifteen weeks, and the paper came out once a week, so that was fifteen ads and fifteen commissions earned.

This is what I thought. Now, I want to ask, have you ever been paid for selling ads for the *Kansas City Call*? No? Well, neither have I. To this day, if you got a percentage from *The Call*, well then I got a percentage from them. That was 1959, and I am still waiting for my first commission dollar for selling all those ads. I never received the commission they promised, so I went looking. I am a loyal subscriber to *The Call* to this day, but every week when the paper arrives in my Worthington, Ohio mailbox, I still look to see if that ad check is in there.

One job ended and another one opened—a process that took me a long way around to where I belonged.

The Long Way Around: After I quit *The Call*, I was going to be a policeman. Kansas City was hiring police officers, so I went down and passed the Civil Service Test. Bill Myles was going to be a policeman. I was on my way down to fill out the paperwork for the appointment when I said to myself, *Shucks, I can't be a policeman. That's not me. I can't do anything I'm not good at. I can't be a good policeman. If you were to call me and say there are prowlers around your house, well, I would take the long way around to get there. That's true.* That was what I said to myself. Now, I would want the police to actually show up if I called them. I always had the idea that if I can not be good at it, I would not want to do it. Therefore, I did not become a policeman.

A few weeks later, I took the test for the fire department. I passed that, too. Instead of a policeman, I became a fireman. I was a Kansas City fireman for eighteen months. It was the best job I ever had. I worked twenty-four hours and was off forty-eight hours; I worked ten days a month. Sometimes on my off days, I worked for a moving company. I was always hustling. Then, too, I was always confronted with racism. A few examples follow.

Egg Sandwiches: While I was a fireman, I played some semipro football for the Kansas City Buffaloes. We played all around the Midwest: in Oklahoma, at the Iowa Penitentiary, and down in San Antonio, where we faced athletes who had earlier played for the University of San Francisco on their 1951 National Championship team. They kicked our rear ends. Our quarterback tried to get out of the game. I said to him, "Man, are you going to be chicken? Are you going to let these guys beat us?" Everybody was trying to get out of that game. Those players were good.

How good? Well, the San Francisco team that those guys played, later became famous in the book *Undefeated, Untied, and Uninvited.* The team enjoyed a perfect season. It had ten future NFL players, five future NFL Pro Bowlers, and three future NFL Hall of Famers—a record for a single college team. Pete Rozelle, former NFL commissioner, was their sports information director at that time, and he later said, "If we had an expansion franchise, I would start it with just that team. It was so great." Yet despite its 9-0 record, the University of San Francisco team was denied a bowl game because they refused to leave its two black players, Burl Toler and Ollie Matson, at home, as was the custom for many bowl games of that day. This was still the fifties; there were still some places where blacks could not play in a bowl game, or even buy a sandwich.

Texas was one of those places, which brings me to another semipro story. One evening, our team was coming back from a game against an Army team at Brook Medical Center in San Antonio. It was a hard game and we were hungry, so we stopped at a restaurant and went in to eat. Of the thirty-five men on the team, maybe twenty-five or so were black. People in the restaurant were afraid of us. We went to the restroom first, and then we came out and sat down. I did not see the signs that said "Colored Here" and "White Only." Unknowingly, we sat down in the white section.

I never thought of Texas as being the Deep South. I thought of the Deep South as places like Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and their neighboring states. I had gone to Texas a few times with my parents, but I was a child, shielded from racial things.

A white man came out and directly told us that we could not sit there. We did not move. Of course, in face of a mostly black team, the man dared not do anything. The brothers sat there. The white man went back into the kitchen and got a black brother, who was probably a dishwasher, to come out and explain why we could not sit there. The brother told us that he might lose his job if we remained. Therefore, we left. We did not want to hurt him. This was an example of the perpetuation of segregation. The brother in the kitchen could have paid the price for us by standing up for our rights. Remember, this was 1959 or 1960; the 1964 Civil Rights Act had not yet been passed, even though there was an 1868 Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that provides all citizens with the "due process of law" and "the equal protection of the laws."

We went out and got on the bus, ready to go, when one of our players stood up. "Men, I'm hungry," he said. "We might as well get some sandwiches. We have a mighty long way to ride." Remember, too, there was not a fast food drive-through on every corner in the 1950s. We had a little stocky guard named Tom on the team. Tom was a salesman, and a real good guy. Tom was also white, so he offered to go in and get some sandwiches for us. They could not refuse him; so he went in and talked them into making some egg, bacon, and tomato sandwiches for us. The owner who had run us off was soon cooking up enough sandwiches for each of us to have two. That would be about seventy sandwiches. While they got the sandwiches going, I sat on the bus thinking about them. Of course, the longer we sat, the hungrier I got. You can imagine how long it took to make seventy sandwiches. I began to smell them, to taste them. I could taste the tomato juice and bacon grease and mayonnaise trickling down my dry, parched lips. We sat there for about forty minutes until Tom got up and said, "I better go in and get them." In he went, but he soon came back to the bus, empty-handed. Of course, everyone was asking, "Where are the sandwiches? What happened to the sandwiches?"

Well, Tom got on the bus and hollered, "I went in there, thought about it, and I told the guy, 'You know what? You can just keep your %#@&$# sandwiches!' And I turned and walked out." The owner had been in that restaurant for forty minutes, making all these sandwiches, and Tom just walked in there and told him he could "just keep those sandwiches." The men on the bus started cheering. They were cheering, screaming, hollering, and clapping.

Tom showed them. Tom was a hero to all players on the bus, except me!

I was mad. I had been waiting for the sandwiches. I was salivating so much, I could taste them; and Tom said to the cook, "You can just keep those sandwiches." If the other men had not been clapping, I would have knocked Tom out. You do not know what it was like to sit there that long and think about those sandwiches. Then Tom went into the restaurant and decided to be a hero. Of course, looking back, Tom was a hero. We just drove off and let the restaurant owner keep those seventy sandwiches. To this day I think, "Serves him right!"

Working for the fire department was a good experience, but my parents and wife were on my case.

On My Case: During those eighteen months in the fire department, Mother was on me constantly about going back to school. I was only eighteen hours short of earning a degree. Lorita was in my ear about a degree. Dad was on me. They all were after me to go back. Even my barber, Ralph Brown, relates stories about how he got on me to Steve Davis:

> Bill Myles has always been a gentleman and football has been his life. We go back a long way. I grew up in Kansas City and played with Bill in high school when he was co-captain of our team. We were on the fire department together, and I cut Bill's hair in my shop.
>
> One of the things that I admired about Bill was his willingness to go back to school after he left Drake to start his family. Bill was in the Barber Shop one day, and he said, "You know, I would really like coaching to be my life. I'm thinking about going back to school." Bill asked me what I thought about it.
>
> I told him, "Bill, if I had spent that much time in college and I only needed eighteen hours to get my degree, I would give up the fire department. I would give it up in a minute and go back. You are going to be doing something that you like to do. It won't be like me. I am on the fire department because I need a job. I'm only going to be on the fire department long enough to get me enough money to get me a shop."
>
> That's what I told Bill. I didn't want to be on the fire department, but it helped me become a hair stylist, because I was going to school at the time. Of course, I ended up being on the fire department for twenty-seven years—unlike Bill, who took my advice.

Everyone encouraged me; but the real reason I decided to go back was because on all job applications, the high school box was all I could check for education. I could not check the college line, which left me out of consideration for many jobs.

In September of 1961, I decided to go back and complete the eighteen hours for my college degree. Debbie had been born, so when I went back to Drake in August, Lorita stayed in Kansas City and taught school. In June of 1962, I earned my degree, which made me the second Myles boy to get a degree from Drake University. There were four years in a row that one of the Myles boys graduated from Drake. My brother John earned a bachelor's

degree, followed by his master's degree. Then I got mine. Then Phil got a degree. We had four in a row, and my parents were quite proud of the "kids from the two-room Penn School."

A degree and a job are two different things, however. I had the first, but not the second. Once again, *place* was at work, because I soon got my first big coaching break. That is, if you consider a job offer to coach a football team that has not won a single game in eighteen years a break.

Second Quarter

Southeast Stadium
Kansas City, Missouri

1962

Chapter 11

THE TURNAROUND

One thing about the black community in Kansas City was it was easy to keep running into the same people. Because of segregation, we looked out for each other. In the spring of '62, Coach Jim Wilkerson called me at about nine o'clock at night. It was the very night I got back from Des Moines after graduation, and he wanted to know if I could come over to see him the next day. I had just finished college. I had just graduated, and gotten back home.

"Coach," I said, "I can't be over there tomorrow. I'm in Iowa."

Lorita looked at me as if I were crazy and asked, "Why did you tell him that?"

Actually, I thought that I was in Iowa; but I was not. I was on the couch at home in Kansas City, taking a nap, when Coach Wilkerson called. He woke me up, and in my confusion, I thought I was in Iowa. I called him back and said I could come over.

I knew Coach Wilkerson from the Y and from when I had been in school. He wanted me to coach at Central High School with him. At that time, Central was winning; they were kicking everyone's tail and Coach wanted me to assist him. It was my dream come true, except for one thing. The Kansas City School District did not assign me to Central, but rather to Manual High School. In 1962, I accepted my first high school football coaching position as an assistant coach at Manual High School; and this is where the "break" part comes in.

The Eighteen-Year Streak: Manual High was a school like R.T. Coles, where I attended eighth grade. Manual was a trade school before integration, where all the whites in Kansas City went to take auto mechanics, brick masonry, etc. By the time I arrived as a coach, Manual was still a trade school, but it had been integrated. It had whites and Hispanic Americans, but it was located in the black neighborhood—and it was still a predominately black school.

When I started at Manual, they had not won a single football game in eighteen years. Not one single game! It was reported to be the longest losing streak in the nation at that time—at least 144 straight losses, and likely more. Manual had lost for so long that no one even remembered how many games it had been; and this is where Bill Myles was sent for his first coaching position. That was my "break." A school that had not won in eighteen years!

You might ask how does a school go that long without winning a game? First, Manual was a trade school. Secondly, it was in one of the poorest

sections in Kansas City. Lastly, we had kids who were not too interested in school; at that time, they often did not get past the tenth grade. Do not get me wrong; the kids from Manual were okay kids, but the deck was stacked against them.

When I got there, I agreed to be an assistant coach in football and basketball. This was my first coaching experience; but as I have pointed out, for as long as I can remember, coaching was all I ever wanted to do. Even if Manual had not won a game, I was ready to coach. There was one problem, though. The kids were not ready. The football players were passive. They would not hit; they would not compete; they would not do anything. One day I said to them, "Guys, we haven't even had a fight out here." Well, when you're the only team in the country that has lost eighteen years in a row, what is there to fight about? We tried to get fights going in practice, to generate some competition, because these kids would not compete on the field. We just had to instill some competitiveness in them and develop some confidence.

There were other things working against the players besides a tradition of losing. It was almost a half-mile from where we dressed in the school to our practice field. We could not just walk out the back door and start. Four or five blocks separated the school and the Paseo Park practice field. We always had to save a little energy during practice, because we had a long walk back to school when it was over. In addition to this problem and that of having a no-win mentality, the equipment was substandard. No wonder they were losing.

The staff finally got the team "kind of going"; and in the first game of the season, we went in the locker room at half time with the score at 0-0. The players were looking around thinking, *man, this is the first time it has been nothing to nothing.* They were ready to declare victory and go home. It was the first time they had ever been in a game when the score was not 14-0 or 21-0 at halftime, the first time it was not a licking. The players were satisfied. To them, they had a victory. Although we tried, we could not get them over the hump in the second half in order to win the game. Zero to zero at halftime was a victory! We kept going, but the other team finally beat us 7-0. Getting beat 7-0 was a win for this team. The players were elated. It was clear—the program's climate was changing and the administration continued to push for improvement. As a result, Manual School got the attention of "Faces in the Crow."

Faces in the Crowd: We kept after the athletes, week after week. Finally, we won a game! Can you imagine what it was like for them to win their first game, after eighteen years of losing? Ironically, the team's first win in eighteen years resulted in a defeat for my alma mater, Lincoln High, the school that my players beat. Members of the Manual team were ecstatic! They were euphoric. It was something. The players did something that was big news in Kansas City. Everybody knew that Manual School had been a loser in football. Now the losing streak was broken even though Lincoln High, my alma mater, suffered defeat by them.

When we broke the losing streak, Manual High and Leonard Jones, our quarterback, got national coverage. Leonard got his picture in *Sports Illustrated,* "Faces in the Crowd." It was hard to buy a copy of the magazine in the

black neighborhood in Kansas City at that time. Today, fifty-two years later, I still read the magazine, and I still look at its "Faces in the Crowd" column to see what people are doing. That feature has endured for more than half a century now, and one of my first players was in there.

We did not send information about our victory to *Sports Illustrated.* The magazine found us. Our win was that big. The week after the game, Manual had a victory assembly on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. At one point I said, "Gee, we're getting ready to play them again." Eighteen years multiplied by ten senior players per year makes about 180 Manual players who never experienced a winning football game. After eighteen years of losing, perhaps about 2,700 Manual students never experienced winning one high school football game. It was huge! However, I must confess that it was the only victory that whole year.

People often ask me how we turned the program around. "They were the same kids," people would say. "What did you do? How did you do it?"

This is what I tell them: I, alone, was not responsible. A group effort did it. There were good coaches and good people. First, the players had to be convinced that they could win. A positive approach was necessary. If players do not believe that they can win, they won't. The whole staff was new the year I went in. The previous head coach was Coach White, the same man who was my coach during my freshman year in high school, and the same coach who had punched me in the chest. He was just too hard on players. During his last year, no more than twelve or thirteen players tried out for the team. It was just the idea of convincing the players that they were something, and that they could win. It was the idea of maybe trying to start a fistfight in practice, to see who had the competitive genes, to see who was tough, and to make them a little more physical.

We had the right staff to start the turnaround. Bill Herron was in his first year as head football coach. Bill was not that much into football, but he was a good disciplinarian. Bill also had the advantage of having a staff that really wanted to coach and win football games. All of his assistants were winners, and Bill Herron allowed us to coach. This was the first year for all of us, and we all came in full of enthusiasm, experience, and skills that meshed well. What a place to learn! *The place I sought was seeking me.*

Sylvester Harris, who was two years ahead of me in high school, had played for the University of Nebraska behind Bobby Reynolds, Nebraska's great All-American halfback. Sylvester had also played against Hop Cassidy in Ohio Stadium when Nebraska played there in 1955. Sylvester read the paper, front to back, every day; and he was one of the smartest people I have ever known.

Before coming to Manual, Lawrence Swisher, who was from Kansas City, Kansas, had been a well-known and successful sprinter at Kansas State Teachers College in the late '30s. Lawrence knew speed.

Jack Bush brought a winning tradition to the staff. Jack graduated from Lincoln in '42, the year they were undefeated and were the State Champions in football. Jack could diagnose things. He could see many things, perhaps because he was a math teacher. I always noticed people's skills, and I saw that

Jack could immediately identify what was going on, the blocking angles, and the different alignments.

Lastly, there was Don Hudson who had played quarterback for Lincoln University, and had served as an assistant coach there for twelve or thirteen years. Don brought us college experience, and Bill Herron had enough sense to let him run the offense. Don, too, would go on to become a pioneering college coach, as I will discuss later.

At that time, the head coach did not recruit his staff; rather, the Kansas City school system assigned coaches. When I look back at the outstanding pedigree of that first staff, I marvel at how we all landed there at the same time by happenstance. I believe that the chance to work with that group in my first coaching job was fate. With the right people working together, winning was inevitable.

You Win With People: As I stated earlier, we won only one game the first year. In a nine-game season, we were 1-8, but that was just the start of it. The experience of my first year helped me to develop a theory of coaching—that being, if you have the right people, you can win—a theory I would carry with me the rest of my coaching career. To put it simply, you need a good lineman, a good receiver, and a good back. We did not have a lot that first year, but we later found those three.

We had one outstanding lineman, John Richardson. He was as good as any player I later coached in high school. At six-foot-two and about 220 pounds, John could handle any player. He made All-City that year, while playing on a team that won only one game. We also had a good little back by the name of Jimmy Morton. He could make people miss him. We had a basketball player, Art Strozier, who played wide receiver. Art went to Kansas State the next year on a football scholarship and eventually played two years in the NFL for the San Diego Chargers. Art had speed, athleticism, and could catch the ball. We had those three athletes who could play for any school in town. The three skill needs were covered; and it was a good thing because there were many other challenges. Coaching was changing to meet the new challenges.

Coaching Was Changing: Manual High School was changing when I arrived, but so was coaching. It started changing during the seven years when I was away from Kansas City. When I arrived at Manual, coaching was different from what it was when I played. It is even more different today. When I first played high school football, I wanted to become a coach. In many cases today, the school has to really search for coaches. Sometimes, the principal has to assign someone to the job. Most assignees do not want to do it. In addition, today's students have too many other things to do. When I was in high school, however, an athlete who wore a letter sweater and had awards was the big cheese at school. Today, an athlete does not receive as much praise.

While I was playing, and then when I first started coaching, school was a neighborhood thing. Bussing is one of the things I do not care for. When I walked down the street in my home neighborhood, people would say, "You played a good game," or maybe they would say, "He gave you a little problem last night." A player was something in the community. We would go to the

drugstore to get cherry cokes. At that time, salesmen mixed the cokes at the fountain. The worker drawing the cokes would say, "Hey, the guy really got you," or he would say, "You had a good game." People knew what the athletes were doing. When an athlete went down to the Paseo Y, the older athletes who had played before the current ones would say, "You didn't do it. That kid ate your lunch." There was a pride passed from one generation to the next. Players had this going for them. Too many athletes today do not get this kind of friendly attention from those in their communities.

I think back to when I was playing. We had more players who had both parents living with them. Some youngsters did not, but it was a stigma to be born out of wedlock at that time. That started to change at about the time I began coaching; and, unfortunately, it continues today. Now, there is no stigma attached to being born out of wedlock. Movie stars, pro athletes, and many other unmarried people give birth to children. It is on *Entertainment Tonight*. These people are not going to get married, but they are still having a child. I read an article about an NFL player who did this. The athlete, by his own account, fathered eight kids with six different women. There is an embarrassing video clip of him trying to remember the names of all his children. He struggles. He cannot remember the names of his own children! This was not acceptable in the '50s. Someone who did this at that time would not have been able to hold a public position that produced millions of dollars.

When I was a kid, our parents wanted us to be better educated than they were, and to be better off than they were. I was raised with this philosophy. He would always say, "You're a Myles." He preached it like a black version of the Kennedys. He would say, "You are not like the rest of those knuckleheads out there. They can stay out after the streetlights come on; but you must be here at home when they come on. You are a Myles."

Today that has changed. I have watched the change happen over my career, beginning with my first coaching job at Manual High. It is a vicious cycle. I had my eyes opened the first year at Manual, when I saw a mother who became a grandmother at age twenty-nine. Her daughter had a baby at age fourteen or fifteen to make her a grandmother. That made two generations who were mothers at fourteen. The pregnant girls would say, "He told me he loved me." Well, if he can bat a thousand just for saying that, it is not hard for a male to do.

In my first year of coaching, I would go to my players' homes, and some mothers would ask me, "Could you get me a pound of bacon? A dozen eggs? A quart of milk?" One time, I actually saw a refrigerator empty. I had it a lot better than those families, while I was growing up. I had great compassion for them; and sometimes I took groceries and other things to them.

The next thing I knew, families would be getting ADC checks. I taught Common Learning at Manual High School. In my two-and-a-half hour class, I often said, "Let's do a budget." I told them they had $400 for a month. That was $100 a week for a family of four. I said to them, "We're taking $20 and putting it in insurance and savings. The rest of it is yours to do with it as you please." Back then, phone bills were $5 or $6, but these kids would come up with $15 for this expense. They would set aside something like $12 per week for food, when they made their monthly budget.

I would go to the board and show them. "Let's break down breakfast, for example. For one week, let's say we need a dozen and a half eggs. Let's say we need a pound of bacon. Let's say we have to have a box of oatmeal and a gallon of milk. This is just breakfast," I would tell them. "What does that cost? You are sitting here telling me you have $15 for a phone, and you only have $12 left for food for the week. I would rip that phone out!" I went into their homes. When they got the ADC check, they would go buy a slab of ribs. I started on them, "You know a slab of ribs . . ."

"Coach, you don't like barbeque?" they would interrupt.

"I love ribs," I answered. "Barbeque ribs are a favorite. I can eat a whole slab at Gates Barbeque! However, that is a one shot deal. Then it's gone. You can buy five pounds of hamburger and make a big pot of chili. You can take some of that hamburger, put it over here and spread it through this spaghetti. You don't eat all that in one meal. You make a big pot of chili; you don't eat the whole pot at once. It will last several days. Ribs? Ribs are gone in one meal."

It just got me. Those were the things that I tried to do while I was at Manual. Of course, the parents should have been doing these things but they were not, so somebody had to.

It got worse. That first year, there was a white girl in the building while my team was practicing. I tried to get her to leave, but she said to me, "Coach, I can't leave."

I explained, "I can't have you here now, because these black players are here. If something happens to you, these black fellows will be blamed. I can't risk that happening to my team."

"I can't go home," the girl pleaded.

"Why not?" I asked. "Why can't you go home?"

"My father's there, Coach. He's having sex with me," she confided. "I have to wait until my mother gets home or he'll have sex with me."

That was the first time I had faced that kind of situation. She told me she couldn't tell her mother because her mother would not believe her. This poor child was pregnant by her daddy, and she could not tell her mother! When teaching in the inner city, some of the things seen and heard can rip out your guts. At Manual, we had poor whites, poor blacks, and poor Mexicans. We had different sections. There were many Mexicans in Kansas City. We had Little Guadalupe. Northeast was Little Italy. Then, there was the black neighborhood. Manual was the melting pot for many of the students from poor families. This was the environment, in which my coaching career started.

Despite these challenges, we had a football program on the rise. After we broke the streak and won the first game, things started turning around. The motivation to improve took root in the kids. The players started going down to the gym. The other coaches were gym teachers. Swisher ran the study hall. The coaches stayed late after school. Players hung around. They would see the coaches in the lunchroom. For the first time, many of these students had someone they did not fear. It was a different generation.

These kids were hungry in two ways. They were literally hungry for food, as I have explained; and they were hungry for someone to lead them, to teach them, and to have someone they could trust and respect. It seemed that the coaches met their needs.

That next summer—the summer of '63—I really worked with the players, and food was my ticket to reach them. I invited them over to our house. All summer I fed them. They got navy beans and cornbread with ham hocks. I would have big pots of chili. Sometimes after practice, the players would say, "Hey Coach, when are you going to have us back again?"

Some mornings Lorita would say, "I'm going to cook up some chili today, so you can bring some of the guys around." We did this, and those kids just fought for us and fought for themselves.

We did this in basketball, too. I would tell athletes, "You hit eighteen points tonight and we win, I'll take you to the drive-in for all you can eat." I would tell a player, who was not a scorer, "You get twelve rebounds, you hold your guy to ten points, we are going to the hamburger shop." They would just play their noses off for that. If a player has nothing in his house to eat, food is a real incentive. We developed a good relationship.

That summer we met in my basement to talk about the things they needed to do to break old habits. We worked to break bad habits by taking the proper steps, doing the techniques, and convincing them that they could win with technique. A team cannot win simply by thinking it is tough. It has to have techniques. We worked on this all summer.

I had blocking dummies in my backyard to teach techniques. I fed them to bulk up their bodies. Today folks ask me if all that was legal. I do not know. Probably not. Even if it were illegal, nobody cared what we did back then. We had not won a game in eighteen years. What was anybody going to do? It was not like big colleges were scouting us. It was not as though our opponents were worrying all summer about what Manual High was going to do to them. Again, the school had won one game in eighteen years, and I had a bunch of starving kids. Outsiders were not concerned about what we were doing to improve our team's performance, but our coaches did not work alone. We had help. My help was Lorita, my wife. She explains the situation this way:

> Ours was not a house. It was a home, with a lot of love. Bill would bring the players over. They would cook on the grill. Our son Billy still talks about helping his Dad slice oranges to give his players at halftime. Bill's players always felt comfortable in our home, and going to Bill when they needed help. Occasionally he would get a call at the wee hours of the morning to come help a kid. They knew he was not a pushover. He always had a booming voice when he could say, "Listen up." That is all it took to get their attention.

The aforementioned incidents have probably painted a visual image of me, as a young father and budding new coach. However, there is undiscussed information that might change the image once it is discussed. Marriage, college graduations, coaching, and teaching were not the only new developments in the lives of the Myles family members in 1963.

Family relationships also help to paint a visual image of a person. Brother John had a new bride, whose name was Gloria. Her impression of her new brother-in-law Bill, a Manual High School coach in 1963, is an interesting one. She describes it as following:

I met Bill Myles through my new husband John. The year was 1963. John spoke of his family often. Phillip, the youngest brother, was soon known to me as he joined our D. C. household while studying law at Howard University. The rest of the family was just voices on the phone—except for Bill. I had a very vivid mental picture of Bill. With great pride, and a dose of envy, John described his older brother as a physically imposing man—six-feet-two, around 230 pounds, with well-defined arm muscles, broad shoulders, and a thirty-two-inch waist. Think Jim Brown, star of the Cleveland Browns!

Those arm muscles gave John pause. After all, John had spent several years lifting weights, yet to his knowledge, Bill had never lifted a dumbbell. Thus, John viewed his brother's waistline with a degree of disbelief. I can still hear him proclaiming, "He's got such a tiny waistline, just like Jim Brown."

John's image of his brother was the "strong silent type." Upon meeting Bill, that proved to be an accurate physical description. A man of few words, in public settings Bill spoke in a manner of decorum, and only when a question was asked. However, when he was around those he knew, Bill could talk the horns off a Billy goat. We have exchanged many words—happy and sad—but always in loving respect.

To John, the most amazing aspect of Bill was his indifference to acquisitions. After all, John and Phil were world-class consumers; but in John's own words, 'All Bill ever needed was a football in one arm and Lorita on the other.' After the basic needs of Billy's family were met, he needed or wanted very little else, especially if it had to be bought on an installment plan. The thought of a thirty-year mortgage took Bill some getting used to. Bill was thrifty, but thrift does not preclude generosity. Bill always had enough to share with those in need, be it players he coached or his family. Bill's helping hands in those years often required sacrifice by his own young family, the very essence of generosity.

There was one aspect of Bill's life that I had to learn about by myself. When he wants to know something, he asks. He has no need to—and rarely does—censor his thoughts or speech. During the first conversation we ever had, Bill asked, in his deep and resonant voice, what size dress I wore. My size ten passed. Months later Bill must have forgotten my answer. When I showed up at Bill's in a large orange traveling dress (now called a float, but then dubbed a tent), Bill commented, 'My brother married a Big One.' Yet he did not indicate I was less acceptable, and this is what I label, "Bill's innocent honesty." To me it is his most endearing quality. One need not waste time trying to decode a conversation with Coach Myles. He speaks his mind simply, clearly, and without malice. His players learned this during the summer of '63. In the ensuing years, while we lived in Kansas City, I observed a man who did not form hasty opinions of others. I came to know and love this coach who responded to late night calls from

his schoolboys, from players to whom he was a father figure, and for some, the only father they had.

The impact of my personal and professional work with Manual players paid off, but I did not stay at the school long enough to witness the big change in the team's scores. The school system rolled me out.

We Had It Rolling: In the summer of '63, the second season was looming at Manual. As Gloria explained, I had their attention. We assistant coaches had it rolling. Then two weeks before the season was to start, the bottom dropped out. The school system transferred me to Lincoln High for the '63–'64 school year. I did all that work to build Manual football up—and then I was gone!

Members of the Manual High School team really came through. They continued to develop for the next eighteen months; and they went from being winless in eighteen years to being the 1963 City Champions. Even though I was not their coach in the second year when they won the championship, they were my guys, my team. For two consecutive years, Manual High beat my alma mater, Lincoln High, which I was now coaching as an assistant to my friend, James Buford.

In 1960, Maxwell Maltz wrote a popular self-help book titled, *Psycho-Cybernetics*. Eventually, many top athletes would incorporate some of the visualization techniques of Maltz's writings into their training regimens. I read the book. It fit, because I needed to change what my players thought about football, how they thought about themselves, how they thought of me as the football coach. My style of coaching was to replace the negatives with positives, to keep telling them how good they were. That was my coaching method; that was the mantra. Later on, in my college years, I would tag this program "Little Victories." I did not name it that in my high school years, but the concept that developed in those early years would become the foundation of my entire coaching career; and it would serve my players and me well.

After a while, my players just believed that they could do it. When Manual started winning, the 1963 City Championship was big news all over Kansas City. To this day, the Manual players still talk about beating me when I was sent to Lincoln High, after I had to leave them. When I went back in 1997 to be honored in Kansas City, Sam Moody said to me, laughingly, "Yeah, Coach, we got you the next year. You left us, and we got you back." At the time, it had been thirty-four years since it had happened, but he still remembered.

Yeah, they did. They beat me when I was coaching at Lincoln; and it is the only time in my life that I was proud to have been beaten. My name was not on the City Championship picture in their yearbook; but it should have been.

That sudden transfer from Manual to Lincoln High turned out to be only one of the surprises for the Myles family that fall of 1963. At the same time, Lorita found out that she was expecting our second child.

Chapter 12

GOING HOME

In Thomas Wolfe's often-quoted *You Can't Go Home Again*, Wolfe's protagonist George Webber realizes, "You can't go back home to your family, back home to your childhood . . . back home to a young man's dreams of glory and of fame . . . back home to . . . things which once seemed everlasting but which are changing all the time . . ."

I experienced that. When I left Manual High that fall of 1963—the year Manual won that championship—I went home to coach at Lincoln High, my alma mater. But times were changing and the Lincoln I returned to wasn't the Lincoln High I had left.

My old teammate James Buford was head coach at Lincoln. James had been a football captain at Lincoln the year before I was, and had gone on to become an All-American at Tennessee State. In 1956, Tennessee State went undefeated to beat Jake Gaither's Florida A&M for a National Championship. Florida A&M had their own All-American at that time, Willie Galimore, who went on to play running back for the Chicago Bears, and Buford's team bested them. Following that, James came back to teach and coach at Lincoln.

James Buford was a childhood friend and we remain close. He would sometimes stay at our house overnight, and Mother would fix us biscuits and syrup on Saturday mornings. We would cut those steaming hot biscuits up and smother them with butter, syrup, and peach preserves that Mom had canned that summer.

Buford and I did graduate work together. In order to keep getting raises in the Kansas City school system, you had to have your master's degree by your fifth year as a teacher. Every summer morning, James and I would ride fifty miles down to Central Missouri State in Warrensburg. We would drive down early in the morning, go to class, and then drive back to Kansas City. At 3:00 p.m. we would go to work down at the icehouse and put in an eight-hour shift until 11:00 p.m. The next morning we would be up six and do it all again. We did that for eight weeks in the summer, for three or four summers, to get our master's degrees. When we finally finished, we had earned them!

Lincoln hadn't been doing much before Buford, and they had only one winning football season in the eight or nine years before the other new coaches and I came in. So that first year when I was an assistant, we tried to get things turned around, just like at Manual. My first season there, in the fall of 1963, we were 3-6.

Society wasn't the only thing that was about to change in the fall of 1963. So was the size of the Myles family. On April 30, 1964, William Myles III was born, and I had the son every father dreams of. Suddenly it was my turn to

be the Dad and role model, not only to Billy, but soon, to a whole lot of other boys as well.

Opportunity Knocks: In the fall of 1965, Cecil Patterson called me one day, prior to the start of my third season as an assistant at Lincoln High. Cecil was head coach at Southeast High and wanted me to go there as his assistant. Southeast was winning championships! They had been winning championships clear back when I was a kid jumping over the wall to see them in Blues Stadium. I had only been two years at Lincoln and we were still trying to build a program. Suddenly, I had a chance to go to Southeast where they had it rolling! Black kids were beginning to go to Southeast at that time with integration coming on, so I thought it would be a great opportunity. I went to Coach Buford and said, "Jim, I'm thinking about going out to Southeast. Coach Patterson wants me out there, and at Southeast, they play football to win. We're just playing it here because it's in season."

Buford said, "Well, if you can stick around for two weeks, maybe you can have the head job here. Can you stick tight for about a week or two? I'm thinking about leaving and if I do, you can be head coach here at Lincoln."

That caught me by surprise. "Why's that? What are you going to do?" I asked Jim.

"I think I'm going to get a job with Mobil Oil," Jim explained.

Bill Rowan was in the office too that day. Bill had been two classes ahead of me and an All-State quarterback at R.T. Coles. He was Lincoln's head basketball coach at the time, and as JV basketball coach under Rowan, I was winning Junior Varsity basketball championships. Bill wanted me to stay, and he told me, "You can have your choice if you stay. You can be head coach of either football or basketball. If you take basketball, I'll do football. If you want football, I'll keep basketball." That was quite a gesture for Bill Rowan to make to keep me at Lincoln High.

When I heard that, I went to see my old high school coach Perry Kirkpatrick, who by then was a central office administrator for the Kansas City Public Schools. Coach was a person whose counsel I always valued and so I sought him out. Kirkpatrick told me, "I know you want football. I know football is in your blood, but it's easier to be successful in basketball. In basketball, all you have to do is get yourself two guys. You just go get yourself a giraffe and a guard. You can win. Now in football you can have the two best football players in the city and not win a game!"

I have always remembered that. A giraffe and a guard! Over the years, I have looked at guys in pro basketball and decided, this is true." Look at Wilt Chamberlain. He won at Philadelphia with Hal Greer. Wilt didn't win again until he got to L.A. with Jerry West. Bill Russell always had Cousy or the Jones boys. All you need is two. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar didn't win until Oscar Robertson came to Milwaukee, and then when Kareem went to Los Angeles, he had Magic Johnson. What Coach Kirkpatrick had told me was true. The things I learned from coaches just through conversations still amazes me.

Coach Kirkpatrick said something else that day that was also true. He went on to say, "I know you want football, and you've got to do what your heart wants. You ought to do football." So I took football, and that is how

I got my first head-coaching job, the position at Lincoln High School, my alma mater.

Kirkpatrick was right. All my life coaching football had been what my heart wanted. Jim Buford noticed that clear back in our high school days:

> Athletics was Bill's early desire, and if there is one person who was single-minded about what he wanted in life, it was Bill and his desire to coach. As long as I have known Bill, he wanted to coach. Bill and I lived in different parts of Kansas City, and after practice, we would walk to the furthermost bus stop that served us both. Bill would then go west and I would go east. Those after-practice walks would reflect that, in terms of an analysis of a game. We'd watch a game on Sunday, and even back then, Bill would analyze it.
>
> When we both went back to Lincoln to teach, I was head football coach and Bill was my assistant. I knew the game, but Bill was a student of the game. I knew then that he was going to be a better coach than I was. He had a critical eye for the skills required to perform at a high level, not just in football but in all sports. He followed sports religiously. Bill's music sheet was scorecards and his analysis of players and the game itself.
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> It is interesting how athletics became Bill's foundation. Bill has always been interested in biographies and autobiographies—reading the lives of famous people and successful people. In doing so, he has essentially patterned a lot of his actions and beliefs after the people whom he regarded as success stories. Bill can tell you about Babe Ruth, Ted Williams, Jackie Robinson, Tom Osborne, Woody Hayes, Paul Brown, Vince Lombardi, Jim Brown, Lew Alcindor, and Wilt Chamberlain. Those guys were important and Bill would read about them, observe them, talk to them. They would all have advice that was good and Bill would pick it up.
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> Long before Bill got to Tom Osborne and Woody, his thinking had been shaped by our own high school coaches. One of the interesting things about our segregated school was that our football coach attended the University of Michigan; our line coach attended Ohio State. Another line coach attended Northwestern. We had coaches who were not only academically well prepared, they were Big Ten type coaches. Consequently, the foundation for us, and for Bill, was laid clear back in high school. You won't find those kinds of coaches now, with that background, at one particular school. In our segregated times, though, these coaches couldn't work anywhere else; there weren't any other opportunities for them. It was an advantage for us, because we got a strong and solid background. When Bill talks about *Place*, it was certainly at work for us.
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> As my assistant coach, Bill had a single purpose to be the best. Now, Bill didn't necessarily set out to be number one. That wasn't the goal. The goal was to be good; the goal was to be excellent, a good coach with a good reputation, and he always wanted to pass it on and to mentor. Bill's role as a coach was inseparable from being a mentor.

He never missed the opportunity to be a coach in developing skills, but also to be a mentor in how an athlete carries himself. We didn't call them teachable moments back in the day, but they were always present and Bill never missed an opportunity to coach and to mentor, and often they were inseparable.

Jim Buford was my buddy. He was best man at my wedding. He was an All-American football player. I would never have taken that head-coaching job away from Jim. However, football wasn't important to Jim then, and he wasn't as interested in coaching as I was. He wanted to be a doctor, but did not have the financial backing for medical school and instead decided to teach biology. However, Lincoln did not have any openings for the biology positions and instead assigned him to teach general science. Because he wanted to teach biology and chemistry, and they would not give him those courses, he decided to leave education and go to Mobil Oil. It was a shame; but for me, once again, *Place* was at work. I was in the right place at the right time. When the door opened, I just got on that bus and took the ride.

That decision has made all the difference. I still have the picture of my first football victory as a head coach. If you look closely, you can see I was pumped up. Everyone else around me and in the stands had on heavy coats, but I was in shirtsleeves. Then again, maybe I was getting ready even then to become a disciple of Woody Hayes. *The place you seek is seeking you.*

As an assistant under Jim Buford in 1963, that first year at Lincoln, we were building. We won only three games. But the third year, 1965, when I took over as head coach, we improved to 5-4. So I went from 4-14 my first two years in coaching, to over .500 my first year as head coach! Let me tell you how we turned things around.

When I first became a coach, much of what I did was what I learned not to do from Coach White and others. I was learning to coach even back while I was playing in high school. I didn't know then that I would someday coach, but I wanted to, and I was watching what others did. When I got my opportunity, I put to work what I had learned.

One thing I had learned from Coach White was to have a schedule for practice. I learned to do that because Coach White didn't. None of my high school coaches ever had a schedule. Few did back then. They didn't have ten minutes for this, twenty-five minutes for that, thirty minutes of something else, and then out. With Coach White, you never knew how long you were going to be out there. He might have one of the assistants drive a car up and put on his lights to finish scrimmaging. I am proud to say that in all my years as a high school head coach, only one time did I ever keep the players out longer than I had scheduled. They knew in the morning it was going to be two hours. They knew in the afternoon it was from 1:30 to 3:00. They knew that, so the kids worked harder during the two hours I had them. When you don't know how long you are going to go, you always save something, save it in case you need it, because you never know the end.

Bill Herron, the coach I was first under at Manual, was a Peter Principle guy. I remember one time Bill was reading this book on the dive option. He had it there on the ground during practice, and was looking and looking at it

until he finally said to the players, "It says do this." I was thinking, "Coach, why didn't you read that in the locker room before practice?" Under Herron, we would sometimes hurt our players on Thursday nights before the Friday game. That was one reason we only won one game. So I learned from him not to do that.

While I learned not to do some bad things, I also learned to do some good ones. I learned just to come out without pads in game uniforms on Thursday. It served two purposes. One, you see if the uniforms are clean and if everyone has their equipment. And two, you can't scrimmage them! If they mess up you can't scrimmage them; you can't hurt anyone the day before the game if they don't have pads on!

No coach wins by himself, and I was so fortunate to have a first rate staff to support me at Lincoln. George Buckner, Eddie West, and Bill Rowan were tremendous varsity assistants. In addition, Don Williams, Norm Fiddmout, and Sam Cofield built up the Lincoln JV and freshman programs to supply the talent we would need to become successful.

A Tiger's Prayer: The first thing I did as head coach at Lincoln was set the tone for the kind of team and kids I wanted my players to be. Our mascot was the Tiger, so I told my players, "Tigers are clean animals. They only hang out with Tigers; they don't hang out with monkeys and gorillas and giraffes. Tigers are vicious animals, but they are always clean." I didn't say, we don't do this, we don't do that. I said, "Tigers don't do that." I made them think that.

I would talk a lot about the Tiger. "Tigers aren't thugs." I would always make my kids respect things. I wouldn't tell a guy you need to clean yourself up, or you need to wear your pants high. Instead, I said, "You never see a dirty Tiger." I would tell the kids that Tigers don't hang out with lions. When we were going to play the Cardinals, I would say, "Tigers don't hang out with cardinals. There is a cardinal in that locker room and a Tiger in this locker room. Which locker room would you go into? There is no way a cardinal could beat a Tiger!" When we played the East Bears, I would say, "Tigers don't hang out with bears. Bears are big dumb animals." I would state all the positives about a Tiger.

When I had been a student at Lincoln, I had an English teacher named Neal Herriford. Neal was a Harvard graduate who was still teaching when I returned to coach. Some English teachers are not football fans, but I needed Neal on my side. So I went to him and asked him to write a poem for us about the qualities of the Tiger. I took the poem Neil wrote, and made it into a *Tiger Prayer*. We would say it every game in the locker room right before we took the field:

> *Give me the Tiger's alertness in an enemy infested land.*
> *Give me his grace of movement and his stately command.*
> *Give me the Tiger's courage when he faces a foe.*
> *Give me his power to conquer wherever he might go.*
> *And when all this is done, give me his golden majesty that is like the setting sun.*

I would say a line. Then they would repeat the line. When we were done, we would finish it with the Lord's Prayer: *Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name . . .* And then we would run on the field and just clean their clocks. It worked! We talked often about what that poem meant.

Give me the Tiger's alertness in an enemy infested land. The prayer told them they were going out there into battle. The opponent would be everywhere and they were going out there ready. They would be focused; they would be on their game. One line, ten words told them that, reminded them of that. Tigers owned the night. So would they.

Give me his grace of movement and his stately command. They would play fast. They would be elusive. But they also would play under control and in charge, *in stately command.* No one was going to rattle a Tiger.

Give me the Tiger's courage when he faces a foe. The tiger feared nothing and neither would they. No matter whom they played, no matter how big their opponents were, Tigers would never back down.

Give me his power to conquer wherever he might go. The Tiger had the strength to overpower his foe, and so did they. The Tiger owned the jungle and so could they. *Wherever he might go.* It didn't matter if it was our stadium or their stadium, our house or their house; we had the power within to win that game. The Tiger was king wherever he went.

And when all this is done, give me his golden majesty that is like the setting sun. The Tiger was majestic and so were they. At the end of the day, the end of the game, win or lose, they would be humble in victory or classy in defeat. They would hold their heads high.

That was what I told them the *Tiger Prayer* stood for. That was what I expected of them.

Strategy: There were always a couple of guys who made the best leaders. I molded them into leaders for our team. I would talk to them and to the team. We would sit in the bleachers or the gym before practice, and I would tell the team leaders what I wanted to accomplish that day. I would give them a story about where we were coming from, why we were doing what we were doing. I would say to them, "If I can find four football players here, I guarantee we can be city champs, because I don't believe there are twelve of those players in the whole city."

I said to them, "In order to become a football player, you have to ask yourself: *Can I run? Can I block? Can I tackle? Do I have desire?*" If any of the four are missing, you can't be a great football player. Gary Brown played on one of my first teams. The kids teased us and said he looked like me. "He's your dad," they would tell him, "that's why you're playing!" The truth was Gary was playing because he was good. He made All-City Center. He could block, he could tackle, and he had desire. Gary could do it all but run. He was a good center. But he didn't have all four, and those guys are really hard to find. You give me four in high school at one time, four that can do it all, and I guarantee you we will clean up.

I would call guys in individually and tell them, "This is what we need you to do." Not many coaches did that in the early '60s. Then too, I figured out how I could use as many guys as possible. We had kids that would just play

on the kickoff team. We had guys that would play just offense, others that played just defense. I think we were ahead of the game doing that. I took little guys that were quick and found a way to use them at defensive back. We found some guys who could move and made them linebackers. We got kids interested this way.

I thought back to my own senior year in high school. Then you went both ways. My senior year, I played forty-eight minutes of every game the whole season. I didn't miss a single play the entire season. I came out near the end of one game at the end of the season, but there was a timeout on the field and Coach sent me back in. I never missed a play my whole senior year, and I was always thinking about the guy that played behind me. What would I have wanted to do in his shoes? I wouldn't have stayed out there. I found a way of working guys in. I carried it through down into the junior varsity and freshman teams and as a result, I started to get more guys coming out for football, because they were going to play. I found out that when you start playing guys, practices are better. Guys started thinking, "I'm going to play on Friday nights; I'm going to play when the lights are on." My practices were better. That was how I built my program.

Football is a very simple game. You just find the guys who can make a difference. Even back then I told myself, "I've got to find one stud lineman, one clutch receiver, a good quarterback, and a blazing running back. If I have those, I can fill in the rest." On offense, if I had that one stud lineman, I could run over him when it was third-and-one. If I had one good receiver, I could throw to him on third-and-long. If I had one good running back, I could move the chains.

Over on the defensive side, I would put that same stud on the line. That running back would be my linebacker with the speed to get to the ball. And that fleet receiver would be my defensive back. I had every level covered, all with a quarterback and three other good players.

I watched the San Francisco 49ers when they were coached by the late Bill Walsh, and were winning with Jerry Rice, Joe Montana, and Roger Craig. They had Ohio State's own John Frank at tight end. Over on defense they had Charles Haley at linebacker and Ronnie Lott at safety. The Forty Niners said we are going to have these great guys, we are going to play them, and the rest of you can come along for the ride. That was the way it was. On January 22, 1989, they rode those guys to victory over the Cincinnati Bengals in Super Bowl XXIII. It was the same strategy I tried to use in high school at Kansas City.

I later watched the Dallas Cowboys do this same thing in Super Bowl XXX. They had two great offensive guards, Nate Newton and Larry Allen, a guy who once bench-pressed 692 pounds! They had two great tackles, Mark Tuinei and Erik Williams. All four were Pro Bowl or All-Pro Selections many times. Of course, there was quarterback Troy Aikman, running back Emmett Smith, and wide receiver Michael Irvin. On defense, they had that same Charles Haley, now at end for the Cowboys, having come over from the 49ers. Deion Sanders was the shutdown cornerback and the other corner Larry Brown was MVP of that Super Bowl. So they made you play ten against ten on defense. They had

every level covered on both sides of the ball. They were doing it with more players, but it was the same thing I used to do.

Making of a Champion: I mentioned *Psycho-Cybernetics* and using those techniques at Manual. We used them with my Lincoln players, just as we had done at Manual. Again, it was about changing the culture. To me it was just changing the players' minds. It was just getting them to believe, getting each of them to believe he was a Tiger. It was getting them to believe what a Tiger stood for, to understand the pride of how a Tiger carried himself.

This did not happen overnight. When we had two-a-days they had to bring a lunch. Gary Brown and Gary Black, two of my former players, still talk about the days they could not go home like players at the other schools. With some of the kids I had, if they went home, they might not have come back for the afternoon practice; so I made them all stay. You win a lot of games before school ever starts when you're going through those two-a-days. I would just lie there in bed at night thinking of things to say to those guys the next day. We had them there and we were not going to let them go home. We were going to make them think it was us against the world. Our little group. We were a cut above anybody else going to this school. I just poured into them my philosophy.

Since I did not let them go home between practices during two-a-days, I would take down the tumbling mats, and they would lie down in the gym to relax. While they were lying down, I was up there talking to them. I was giving them my philosophy. I was spelling out CHAMPS for them, explaining what it takes to be a Champion:

Concentration
Heart
Attitude
Modesty
Practice
Sacrifice

Of course, concentration was the first word of CHAMPS, so the first day of camp, it was talking to them about *Concentration.* Concentration is doing whatever it takes to become a champion. Concentration is taking care of your body. Talking care of your studies. Taking care of your behavior. Concentration is competing in the classroom. Concentration is me not hearing of guys drinking, not hearing of them getting into trouble. Concentration is doing the right things, doing our lessons, taking care of your body. Do you have the concentration it takes to become Champions?

The next day it was *Heart.* I talked to them about the heart of a champion. A champion's heart never quits. A champion's heart is big. A champion's heart is tough. A champion's heart has something you can reach down for when the going gets rough. Do you have the heart of a champion?

It was *Attitude* the third day. We must think like champions because we work harder than *others* do. We act like champions because we are better prepared than others are. We have the mindset of a champion, because even

though others are trying to take our manhood away, we want it more than *they* do. What kind of attitude do we have? Am I worried about some guy being better than me, about the coach giving him more help than me? Are we playing together as a team? Do we have the attitude of a Champion?

Modesty was day four. We have the modesty of a champion, because when you are great, others talk about it; others remind you of your success. If you have to sound your own horn, they do not respect you yet. You are not a champion. A champion does not believe what others say about how good you are because they are softening you up to believe it is easy. A champion does not believe people who butter you up. A champion speaks with deeds rather than words. A champion proves he is a champion. Can we play together? If we do, we will get all the awards. They will take care of themselves. Do we have the modesty of a Champion?"

By day five, we were into the *Practice* of a champion. This was about the time we were hitting the wall in two-a-days. Players were questioning themselves. Some wanted to quit. I explained why they were doing this: "You ache. You are tired. You think you do not need to come back tomorrow. But a champion will come back tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, and as many days as it takes to become a champion. A champion is always better today than he was yesterday. Nothing stays the same and you are either getting better or getting worse. A champion is getting better every practice. Are you? Are you better after every practice? Are you better going out that locker room door tonight than you were coming in this morning? Do we practice like Champions?"

The last day we talked about the *Sacrifices* that a Champion makes. A champion will give more than the man across from you will give. How much will you give? Will you give more than he will? A champion will sacrifice for the team. Will you? Will you put your team ahead of yourself? Will you sacrifice enough to be a champion?

Once I exhausted the CHAMPS speech, I had the four things it takes to be a football player. *Can I block? Can I tackle? Can I run? Do I have desire?* Each one of those was also a talk between practices during two-a-days. I started this the first year I took over. They never had been through that.

Can I run? Am I speedy, quick, and wanting to get to the football?

Can I block? Can I get the second step down the quickest, because that is the step we are using to make contact? The block is about determination. Do I have more determination and more guts than the other guy?

I told them we were going to teach them how to block, and we worked on it. We did it one step at a time. "This is what happens on the first step," I told them. "This is the second step. This is where we make contact, on the second step. This is where you lift." Of course, the lift in the block comes from rolling those hips forward; so we put a little joke in it, talked to them in their language. "You gotta have a little *backseat action*," we told them. "You gotta be able to roll those hips forward. If you cannot roll your hips, we are going to make fun of you. Joey, you can't roll those hips? You have never had a little backseat action? You know what backseat action is, Joey? You and your girl have never had a little backseat action at the drive-in before?" Now by this time, everybody was laughing at Joey, and of course, no teenage boy wanted

to admit he did not know about backseat action. Man, we had them rolling those hips all over the place. Before long, the whole team was rolling their hips into their blocks. Some of those kids had never even heard of backseat action, but they were rolling those hips like pros.

"Coach, I got that," they would say. "Joey, he's a square so he doesn't know about it, but Coach, I got it." No high school boy ever wanted to be accused of not understanding backseat action.

Can I tackle? Tackling is desire. You either want to do it, or you don't. Are you tougher than the kid you are tackling, tougher than the kid across from you? Will you send the message, "I've come here tonight, and I'm gonna be here for three hours. Are you gonna be here for three hours? It's going to be a long day for you. I brought my lunch bucket. I'm here. The first play I'm coming off and I'm going to hit you under your chin with my helmet right now."

Do I have desire? Do I have pride? I started off talking about pride; but then I found out that one of my players had been kicked out of his house, was living under his steps, and wouldn't tell me about it. When I asked him why he had not told me, he said, "I got pride, Coach." So pride became a word I never used anymore. It became *Desire*. Desire is just wanting to do it more than the other guy. Do I want it? Will I let him take it from me? However much he wants it, am I going to want it more? I have my other ten buddies here. Are we fighting for this thing and are we tight? Are we a team? Nobody likes Lincoln High School. It is us against them. Do we want it more than they do? "Don't any of you ever get whipped," I told them. "You don't want me to see you getting whipped."

I could see it too, because I had just started to make film. We had never made film before, because Lincoln could not afford it; so I started making 8-millimeter film, and paid for that film out of my own pocket. I had the person who taught photography to take pictures for me. They had never seen themselves on film, and they did not want me to be on them in the film session, so it became a great motivational tool to instill desire.

I finished by putting them all together—run, block, tackle, desire. "We got guys that can run, can block, can tackle, but they don't have any desire," I told them. "It takes all four. I don't think there are four or five players in all of Kansas City who have that. I don't think there are four or five in the eight public schools that we're gonna play that have all four. I don't think there are that many in our whole league. Do we have four here?"

Of course, these guys were then going to prove to me that they could do this, that they could be one of those four. And I would tell them, "I'm going to find out who my winners are. I'm going to find out who can live CHAMPS. You're not going to get a chance to quit on me on Friday night, because I'm going to know who the winners are before Friday night. We're going to find out who the winners are in practice."

Coming Together: It started to come together in 1965, that first year I was Lincoln's head coach. I mentioned that Cecil Patterson had asked me to come out to Southeast before I took the Lincoln job. Southeast was on the outskirts of Kansas City. The school was high on one of those big Kansas City Hills, at Meyer Boulevard and Swope Parkway, overlooking Swope Park. Southeast had

the Interscholastic League Field, which was behind the school, down in a big deep hollow surrounded by hills. That field was at their school, but all the K.C. schools played there. You could stand up at the school, high up on the hill, and look out over the whole stadium. That hill sloped from the schoolyard right down to the field, and from the top it was quite a view. Up on that hill you were higher than the bleachers, the press box, even higher than the flagpole. Cecil was beating teams so bad that when his team would get so far ahead he would send his best guys up on that hill to watch the game. He would send his first string up there, and they would sit there with their pads off, watching the game, all laid back, so everybody in the stadium could see them preening. That is how good Southeast was.

Well, when we played Southeast that first year, I told my 1965 Lincoln team, "This time he's not going to take that hill. If Cecil Patterson sends his guys up there on that hill, well, he's gonna have to go get them. He's going to have to go up there and get them to put those pads back on, 'cause we're not going to allow that!" We didn't, either. We beat 'em. Cecil Patterson's starters never got to climb the hill that night.

We only were 5-4 that first year, but when we beat Southeast, the Kansas City powerhouse, out at their place, down in that big hollow, well, our people went absolutely crazy! Our people just drove through the neighborhoods, honking horns all night and cheering, because it was the first time in history that Lincoln High had ever beaten Southeast. They celebrated all over town. It was my alma mater's first win ever against mighty Southeast, and I had led them to it in my first season as a head coach!

That was real sweet finally beating them. Southeast was a white school when I was in high school, and I remembered sneaking into their games as a kid. They played some of their games in Blues Stadium, so I had many chances to see them. Since we played on Thursday nights, and the white schools played over there on Friday and Saturday nights, I went to the Southeast games. None of my buddies would go, but I would read about Southeast in the paper and I wanted to see how good they were. Even at that age, I was curious, always wanting to learn, to get the advantage. So I would run up that railroad tie we had against the fence and jump right over into Blues Stadium, sneaking in to see Southeast play. They were the best, and I always wanted to see the best.

Southeast at that time had what we called the white working class. They had the guys whose dads were the telephone linemen, the tough-guy types. They were not poor, but they were rugged people. Southwest had the rich. The two had a rivalry going and there was a trophy between the two schools called the Southside championship.

We had some real good players on that '65 team. That was how we beat them. Gary Brown was an All-City Center. Gary Black, our quarterback, was the league's leading passer. Diamond Warren was a receiver. On the right side, I had the Frank twins, Ronald a 225-pound tackle and Richard a 210-pound guard. We would move the left tackle over beside the twins, in an unbalanced line, and give the ball to Willie Lewis, our star at halfback. Willie was only 185, but behind that big right side, we would just give him the ball and "*grind*

the meat" as Coach Hayes would later call it. We could *grind the meat* up and down the field. And we ground that meat to a winning season.

Let's Go: It took me two years to get the kids fully bought in, but one night in 1967, I knew I finally had them. We came home that night after a win, but I didn't like the way we won. I told them so. All I said was, "If I was one of you, I would go out there on that big hill behind our locker room, out there on that hill that goes way down to Blues Stadium, and I would run that hill ten times. You guys can do what you want, but after the way we played, if I were you, I would go run that hill."

"Let's go," the two captains said. That was all it took. They took them out there. The whole team ran down that hill—we're talking a big thing, not a little dinky hill—and they crabbed up it, and crabbed up it, and crabbed up until they had done that ten times. Now they were in uniform. We had already played a whole game. This was Friday night. Their girlfriends were out front waiting for them. And they were out there in sweaty uniform and full pads, crawling on all fours up and down that big hill.

My assistants stood there watching that and told me, "You got 'em now!"

All along, I had been working to get them to this point. Working them and then giving them a little candy. Working them and working them and then giving them a little candy. Work 'em and work 'em some more, and then toss 'em a little candy. Work 'em and work 'em and toss them some more candy.

One practice I told them we were going to run a certain play. It was the only time I ever had to apologize to them for keeping them long after practice. I said we were going to run this play—"run 24"—no matter what happens. It was like Woody's 26. We were going to be able to run it no matter what. "We're running 24," I told them, "and we're going to score ten times straight before we go in."

It was just half the line, and everybody on defense knew we were running just this one play. Robert Buford was running it. Buford was running it and running it. He would get up to about six straight and someone would tackle him. I would hear him get up and whisper to the guy, "Man, don't you know this fool isn't going to let us go in!"

It paid off. Later on we were playing Westport, with 4:20 left to go in the game. Don't you know we ran 24 and 24 and 24 and 24 and took it ninety yards right down the field and put it in the end zone to win? They believed in it. I learned a lesson that night in practice, though. I learned that I was never going to keep them overtime again. I told them that and apologized. They have to believe you, to believe in you. But they can't believe you if you aren't honest about time.

From then on, when I did that I would put the defense in a formation that couldn't stop the play. They would stop them occasionally, if someone made a great play, but I put them in a defense that usually couldn't stop it. They were learning these plays, how we were going to play them in the game, the fullback dive, the counter dive, and the counter sweep. We coaches were looking, and we were telling them what we were looking for. My players were looking, too. "Oh Coach, it's there," they were telling us. You could see the

guys not even playing jumping up and down on the sideline. "It's there, it's there," they would tell us. You could see their confidence growing. Boom, a guy would take off and go sixty. It was just a matter of changing their thinking. It was telling them over and over again, you can do it, you can do it, *and then work, work, work.*

We were going to make the guy across from us hate his daddy for living in this area, for living where he had to play against us. We were going to make him hate his mama for having him born at that time. The number-two man, we were going to make him hate his coach for making him play, because no matter where he went, we were going to double team him all day. We were going to do this and do that. Pretty soon the guys just started believing it. They started talking about it. They would come out the first play of the game and tell the guy across from them, "We're gonna get you tonight." Psycho-Cybernetics. That was all it was. It worked. That 1967 season we improved to 7-2-1, after two straight years of going 5-4.

Soap Fights: In the beginning, I was trying to get a sled at Lincoln High but we didn't have a big budget. The principal said he couldn't afford it. Then the team started winning and one day he told me, "You know your boys are really coming; they are getting better at blocking and they're really coming."

"Mr. Harwell, you know you told me that I should have a seven-man sled to get those guys to really block it," I reminded him.

"Yes," he said. "I told you that, so you better go on and get that seven-man sled." I made him think that he told me to get a sled, and that was how I got that seven-man sled. As long as it was his idea, it was all right. When it was mine, it wasn't any good! I learned to do those things all through high school coaching, to get equipment for my team.

I had to do all kinds of innovative things to get my equipment. I had "soap" boxing matches where guys would sign up to box each other. They had to both come to me together and say they wanted to box each other. That way the matches were evenly paired and it was a voluntary thing. To get in to watch you had to bring a bar of soap. A bar of soap was the price of admission! That was the only way I got soap for the showers after gym class and practices. All the girls and guys wanted to come to see these guys fight and everybody would bring a bar of soap. The kids didn't have money in their pockets, but they could slip out with a bar of soap from Mom and Dad. Like I said, we didn't have much and our facilities were not equal.

Later on, when I would move to Southeast, I would have pop machines that I rolled out in the hallway between class breaks. I was teaching gym class then, and I would run my guys in gym real hard the last five minutes so they would get good and thirsty and buy that pop after class! I bought uniforms and things with that. But the Lincoln kids wouldn't have any money in their pockets for pop.

When I was at Lincoln, Lorita used to put all the jerseys in our washing machine and wash them. Many of these kids didn't even have anyone to wash their uniforms for them. I would take their game outfits home and do them. You can wear out a washing machine real fast doing that many smelly, sweaty, grass-stained uniforms. Our laundry nook smelled like a locker room!

Later, I got smarter. I would tell them what jersey we were going to wear, and on Thursday it was dress rehearsal. We didn't put on any pads, but they had to have their game uniforms and that way I could check to see if they were clean. If they were not, we had a day to get them washed.

Pregame: I was going home after school one Friday, and I saw some of my guys—the Frank twins who played guard and tackle on the right side of the line—with these girls, eating ice cream and stuff. They had to be back at school at six o'clock and they were out socializing. I decided they were not off their feet and were not resting for the game. From then on, each Friday after school the players had twenty minutes to get to the gym, get on their gym clothes, and be lying on the floor on the mats resting. I took all the protective mats off the wall for them to lie on and get their pre-game rest.

The guys would tell me, "Coach, we gotta eat."

"No," I countered. "It's not what you eat today that's going to help us on Friday night, it's what did you eat Wednesday night? That's the food we're going to use tonight."

We would go through little drills during that session, too. I would line them up and call a play, and they would point out whom they were going to block. They would hook their finger when they were going to pull, little things they made up.

I would do all these things and just continually talk positive. Tigers don't do this, tigers are neat, tigers don't hang out with bears, tigers this, tigers that. That is what makes the kid. Today, the coach does not get the chance to do that. It is the guy on the corner, swinging the gold chain around his finger that is getting the time to talk to them. "Man, you don't want to do that," that guy with the chain is telling them. "We got this thing going on over here and we can do this, we can whip this game on this guy, this guy is going to give us two dollars for this. I got this jewelry here. I'm wearing these fancy clothes. I got these girls. I got this car. You can smoke this here, you can do all this and be like me." This environment hurts the coach today. Before, at the beginning of my era, you had the kids.

Right on Time: *Place* was kind to me in many ways, and Kansas City put me in proximity to good football programs and football clinics. As a head coach, I started going to surrounding clinics. I would head down to Arkansas and Frank Broyles' clinic at Fayetteville, over to St. Louis for the Bud Wilkinson and Duffy Daugherty clinic, and to clinics at the University of Missouri at Columbia, the University of Kansas at Lawrence, and Kansas State at Manhattan. I was able to get to several major events within an easy drive of four hours or less; and I learned from every one of them.

After a couple of years at Lincoln, I began traveling with Cecil Patterson to all these clinics. Cecil was a white coach at Southeast who took me under his wing. I could not get some of the brothers to go to clinics with me; and if they did go, they played cards in their room while the clinic was going on. For some reason, Patterson took a liking to me, so Cecil and I would go to many clinics together.

Coach Patterson and I were always talking football and diagramming

plays. We would be at his house in his garage, or somewhere having malted milkshake, and he would start to show me a play by putting his money up on the table. He would have nickels, dimes, and pennies out there—and he would say, "We do this and this." The nickels, dimes, and pennies would be players. Then he would reach into his pocket, get a couple of big fifty-cent pieces, and slap them down. He would point to one fifty-cent piece and say, "Now this is Russell Washington." After that, he would point to the other and say, "And this is Corky Taylor." Now all the rest of the guys on the table would be little guys, nickels or dimes, but these two big fifty-cent pieces represented his studs. Russell Washington and Corky Taylor were fifty-cent pieces. I always got a kick out of watching him do that.

He was right. They were studs. Russell was that dominant. When Patterson played him at end, he would block down and the whole line would cave in. I saw him one night at tailback in the single wing just carrying the ball right down the field. Seven yards. Six yards. Nine yards. He was a man playing with kids. Russell Washington would go on to become an All-American at Missouri and play fifteen years for the San Diego Chargers, and Corky Taylor played at Kansas State and then for the L.A. Rams. Cecil was a character. He used to name his plays after teachers and girls, because he said the kids could remember them that way. He didn't have numbers. Suzy. That was a sweep. Rosy. That was a reverse. Stout—well, Stout was a mean ole teacher at Southeast and so that was a run up the middle!

Cecil and I would go to these clinics all over the Midwest, and I was becoming known because there would be seven hundred coaches there, and only three or four were black. So it wasn't hard to get noticed and remembered, but it wasn't all by accident. My skin color might have gotten me noticed, but I like to think it was what I did that got me remembered. Many of the coaches were going to play cards in the evening, going someplace else. I was different. I was there to hear these college coaches and learn about football. I was a guy who got there early and stayed there late. If the event opened at 8:30, I would be there at seven o'clock in the morning just looking through the trophy cases and displays at that school.

That worked for me one day at Arkansas. I was standing there in the lobby very early one morning when the legendary Frank Broyles came in. He was going up to his office when he turned to me and asked, "You want to go up to my office with me?" Now what do you think I said? So Frank took me up.

I went up to the office with Frank Broyles where we watched film together. I asked him, "Why did you do this?" He would answer that he did that because of such and such. I would look at the film and say, "Hey, Coach, what you're doing here is different than what you taught us yesterday."

"Bill, that's just clinic talk down there," he confided. "We don't tell them everything. That was clinic talk yesterday down there, but here is what we would really do." Then he proceeded to tell me some of his secrets. Frank Broyles really helped me out, and all because I showed up early. As Buck O'Neil wrote in his book, "I was right on time."

Picture Frank telling me his stuff; and remember now, Arkansas had just won twenty-two straight games! They had just beaten Texas twice at that time. They were really rolling. At this time, Frank Broyles was The Man in the

college coaching world; and there I was, a young coach, watching film with him in his private office. *The place you seek is seeking you.*

Frank had a way in front of a group. I remember one coach who got up in front of seven hundred people at Frank's clinic in Arkansas. Frank was diagramming a play on the board, and this one cocky coach got up and told Frank Broyles, "I can stop that play."

Frank stopped writing. In front of seven hundred people, he turned and asked the man point blank, "What was your record last year?"

The man answered, "Two and seven."

Broyles said to him in front of all seven hundred people, "Well, no wonder you're two and seven! The guy I got here is Harry Jones. Harry Jones is six-foot-two, 205 pounds, and he runs the hundred in 9.7. When we throw this little pass to Harry, and he catches the ball in the flat and turns up field, I look around to see if there are any flags. If not, I turn to my bench and say, 'Get the tee boys, 'cause the next thing Arkansas is going to do is kick an extra point.'" Of course, Harry Jones was a speedster at Arkansas who was on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* that year, and a first round NFL pick of the Philadelphia Eagles.

Frank kept on humbling the man. "No wonder you're two and seven," he chided him. "If you got a guy who can stop this play, you got him in the wrong spot. He should be carrying the ball for you."

After a while, the other white coaches in Kansas City also began to know me and started to make some overtures. They would ask me to go to clinics and share a room. We would get a room, take the mattress off, and put it on the floor. One coach would sleep on the box springs, and one would sleep on the mattress. I would go with these coaches because association with whites had never been a problem for me. While living in the Westport neighborhood, white families were all around our black community. These coaches were good people; and they were good to me.

At one St. Louis clinic, it started to snow. The coaches who had attended with me left St. Louis and went back to Kansas City because it was snowing; but I was determined to stay to the end. On the way back from the clinic, I drove home alone in that heavy snowstorm, while whistling and having a good time. During the drive, I also thought about what I was going to do with next year's team, based on all that I had learned. Meanwhile, Lorita was calling all the other coaches to learn about my whereabouts. I had not gotten home. She was worried. "He stayed," they told her. "He stayed in St. Louis." Lorita was worried to death, while I was having the time of my life.

I met others at these clinics besides Frank Broyles. There was Joe Paterno and Duffy Daugherty in one at St. Louis; and of course, Eddie Robinson, the legend at Grambling. Later Eddie would come up to the NAIA basketball tournament at Kansas City. I learned a lot from Eddie Robinson, but that is a whole different story.

As I was going to these clinics in the early to mid-'60s, there was talk about getting a black assistant coach at some of the colleges. That gave me some hope. Then, at one clinic, Duffy Daugherty and Bud Wilkerson introduced me to a major college coach, who said to me, "Well, we're going to get a black, but the first one I get is going to be from our university, because he

will know the way around campus. I won't have to take him here, take him there." My hopes were dashed.

Now that made sense to me at the time, but I was so naive! Later, I looked back and thought, "What a lousy excuse! A freshman student who comes in there does not know how to get around the campus. I did not know how to get around the campus at Nebraska and they hired me! I didn't know the campus at Ohio State and they hired me!" It was a lousy excuse, though I bought it at the time it happened. Later on, though, it made me think. When that conversation happened in the early '60s, change was just starting to drift on a stirring breeze. That coach's thinking wasn't any different from the thinking of other Americans of the day. Of course, we know now those gentle breezes stirring the winds of change would soon roar into a raging hurricane. Naturally, that leads to the next leg of my journey.

Chapter 13

A COACH, A DAD, AND A PORCH

The '60s were turbulent times. As head coach at Lincoln, I assumed a load beyond football. The family was breaking down. Equal opportunity in education, housing, and employment was just a dream in the eyes of most blacks. And in too many cases, players I coached came from broken homes.

I worked at getting interest going. We had a Dad's Night. We made a sign board with the kid's number on it, and each dad wore that on the field. That was how I got parents to the game. There was one problem; I had lots of kids who didn't have a dad. We tried to get a brother or an uncle to stand in for them. But we had about four kids who didn't have anyone. These kids didn't have a single adult male in their lives who could walk across the field with them. So they asked a teacher to make the walk. That night became big, and things like that got our football program a following, but it also helped make a difference in our kids' lives.

Boys Town—Gary Brown: There are players you never forget, and Gary Brown was the first of many. Gary was a senior my first year, playing center and linebacker, and the best athlete in his class. He was the first player I ever coached who made first team All-City. Gary had a lot of heart and always wanted to be better. But the interesting part of Gary's story lies beyond football. Gary had spent time at Boys Town, in the village of Boys Town, Nebraska, right outside of Omaha. Of course, the original Boys Town began with an orphanage founded in 1921 by Father Flannigan, an Omaha Priest.

I visited Boys Town during high school, and seeing Father Flannigan was quite an experience. It was a good life if you got to Boys Town, or rather it was a better life than what you came from. They took boys who were orphaned or had problems. Some were supposed to be bad kids, but Father Flannigan had this statue on the campus that said, *He's Not Heavy Father, He's My Brother.*

Gary Brown had a good experience there, and was a great kid when he came to play at Lincoln. Gary was interested in learning and wanted to be the best athlete he could be. What he has done with his life since is a testimonial to Father Flannigan and to how football can help teach a kid the right path. Gary's own words capture the story of what he and I were facing at Lincoln High, and his narrative illustrates how football helps overcome that:

> I've had many good things happen to me in life, and Bill Myles is the role model you need for that. It was dire straits when we went to school. We didn't have a lot of hope, but Bill always encouraged us. I first got to know Coach when he came to Lincoln as an assistant

coach. Everyone said I looked like him. It was tough because they were saying, "He's just playing you because he's your daddy." When Bill came, our football team was terrible, and our facilities were terrible. But Coach was always positive. He would give kids rides, feed you, do everything on the upbeat side to make you feel there was more to live for, no matter the situation in your home. On our team, just a couple of us had dads. There were five in my family and Mom raised us alone. We were lower income. You might go home and find your utilities were cut off. Even so, there was always hope for you to do better, because Bill had always succeeded.

He let us know football took hard work. We said though, "Coach is a strange guy. Nobody else wants to help us. Why is he always trying to help us?" I ate many a meal at the Myles house. Coach's wife was so cool. She knew that when we came over it was going to be football and food. She never blinked. Lorita probably fed ten thousand people in her life and she never wavered. Bill couldn't have done all he was doing without that support.

We walked to school and back from all over the city in those days. Coach took us home when it was cold, took us everywhere. During those rides he talked about the work ethic and determination.

Coach has always been a role model. I was one of those kids who teetered and straddled that line. I could just as easily have had a pistol in life instead of my success. My family was wild and we grew up that way. Martin Luther King was soft because he always told us to turn the other cheek. "Heck, I'm not turning the other cheek," I said. "I'm fed up with this. America has too much for me to have nothing."

But it was people like Coach, people who were always trying to do the right thing, who helped me. By the time Coach came to Lincoln, we were in the rebellious stage. I came out of high school in 1966. You could be All-League or All-State then, but the white schools didn't recruit you. That's just the way it was then.

We had nothing. I wore a size fifteen shoe. Coach got me some shoes from the Kansas City Chiefs. They gave me my first pair of football shoes because Coach Myles went to them for me. He would do everything he could for us.

Coach was demanding, but he could be fun and funny, too. I remember in basketball he put in the "Now" play. He put in a reserve and then Coach would stand there and yell, "Now." Everybody was to foul. "*They can't call but one foul,*" Coach told us. He had us laughing, but he had a method to that. I understand now what he was doing. He would put our twelfth player into the game to guard their best player. He was trying to get inside that player's head. Coach would wait until the ball was away from that player, on the other side of the court. When the officials would all be looking at the ball, he would call, "*Now*!" Everyone would foul. Of course, their best guy would get fouled, but he wouldn't get the call because the officials were looking at the ball! Their best player would usually pick up a foul on himself in retaliation—or even better, get tossed! We gladly traded a foul on our

number twelve for one on their number one. That was Coach Myles. The "Now" play!

Coach made us tough because he was always a tough guy himself. He was the kind of guy who had you going around hitting poles trying to make your arms tough! I played center and coach taught me how to snap the ball. Had I listened to him, I would have played college football. He taught me how to long-snap. I had the big hands you need. By the time he got through, I could snap that ball deep and on the money. I could have had a great career as a deep snapper. He wanted me to go, but I didn't listen to Coach and instead went to Junior College to play basketball.

The times I grew up in were so bad, a lot of the older black people and coaches had the philosophy, "I don't give a damn if you don't get yours because I got mine." The system was so bad they didn't feel they could help anybody, that they had to look out for themselves. Coach was never selfish. It was always what he could do to help you. No wonder someone is writing a book about him and all the people he has touched.

My kids wouldn't believe what it was like for me while growing up. When both of my daughters were graduating from college, we were visiting Kansas City, and I drove back to the old neighborhood. My girls locked me out of the car. They said, "Dad, what are you doing over here? Hurry up!"

I was born in Kansas City, but I was out of control as a little boy and they sent me to the original Father Flannigan's Boys Town. I had a little structure put into me there. Boys Town was run by men who weren't scared of you. A lot of them were former products of Boys Town themselves, and you did what they said. It was a real learning experience. I came back to Lincoln High as a freshman, and that is where I met Coach Myles. The streets almost caught me, but I changed, and Coach was a big part of that. When I came back from Vietnam, I started working in childcare. A friend of mine took me out to work at a juvenile facility, and as a result, I worked with children for the next thirty years. Who would have thought I would spend my life working in mental health and behavior modification for the juvenile court, and spend my whole career with kids? And I coached girls AAU Basketball. I got a chance to use what Coach Myles taught me. Later, Coach told me about Woody Hayes and the *pay forward* concept. What Coach taught me enabled me to pay forward with my own life.

I came down with cancer, and probably like Bill, I never realized how many lives I had touched. People helped me. My basketball community brought me food, sent me money. One of the girls that I coached in basketball works for a very influential organization, and she got me a job. She told her people, "I don't want Gary ever to worry, because he has done so much for our community." One of the kids who grew up in the projects, she told me, "Coach, when you used to take us to eat, and pay for us to go to camp, you never knew what

that meant to us." But see, I remember what Myles did and what it meant to me. And now that little girl is very successful.

We're facing the same challenges in the inner city now that we did when I was young. It's beyond race now; it's a poverty problem. When you don't nurture, I don't know how you get that attitude turned around. I see it when my girls play teams from Detroit and Chicago. Their athletes are terrible, because nobody takes any time to teach them. Kids can't raise themselves. If it wasn't for Coach Myles, I might be one of those in the clubs every night, or one whose children are on the streets instead of college graduates. Or, I might have already been killed on those streets. That's how much I owe to my coach, Bill Myles.

Tigerade: Gary wasn't the only former player to make good. Another on that first team was Diamond Warren III. Like Gary, Diamond, too, tells his own story about what our football team and those times meant to his life:

Lincoln High had a history of great athletes, even though it had the smallest school enrollment in the district. We had 1,200 or 1,500 students where every other school had 2,000 or 2,500-plus. It was the culture. When Coach Myles came he was effective in bringing out the greatness.

Coach was an ingenious man, ahead of his time. He came with an attitude that we had never seen. We were coming of age, and most of us were being raised by moms. Probably ninety-nine percent of us didn't have dads. Coach was our father figure. He was the guy we patterned our lives after. I tell you most of us survived because of that.

A couple of things stand out in my mind as examples of Coach being ahead of his time. Gatorade is a household name today. Gatorade was created at the University of Florida in 1965, when the coach asked the team doctor to come up with something to help during summer practices. It became an instant hit when Florida beat Georgia Tech in the Orange Bowl. The Tech coach was asked why they lost. He supposedly replied, "We didn't have Gatorade."

We didn't have Gatorade either, but in 1964, we had Coach Myles' version: Kool-Aid. Coach would have tubs and tubs of Kool-Aid, and the thing was there was no sugar in it. "What is wrong with Coach?" the guys would complain. "This stuff ain't got no sugar in it." That was our Gatorade. Maybe Coach should have named it *Tigerade* and he would be rich today. Coach ran us all day, so we really needed that Kool-Aid, sugar or not. Coach also started the oranges for us. He would slice oranges for energy. We thought we were in heaven getting sliced cold oranges. Heck, we never got those at home.

Another thing we did. Half of the first team line had to practice against the other half of the first team. It was right side against left side. Have you ever heard of that before? I hadn't, either. The first string was so much better than the second string that we had to go against each other. We worked on a play until we could hit it that way. Then in the games we had the advantage.

We had the talent; we just needed someone to show us the way. The first time we ever beat Southeast High, they ran that single-wing like no one else. They were unstoppable. With that single-wing offense, there were three people in the backfield, shifting and spinning, and you never knew who had the ball. When other teams had played them, by the time they decided who had the ball, a guy was going around the right end for a touchdown and the defenders would all be sitting there looking. Coach saw that. He put in this new defense, where instead of going straight up on your man, you circled him. Everybody circled down, like shooting the gap, and hit the man coming through their gap. That's how we controlled them. Coach figured somebody was going to have the ball. We did that, and our defense stopped them.

That's the way we were. We would run through a wall for him. He believed in us and we believed in him. Let me tell you another story. In 1964, Coach had poor Mrs. Myles feeding us spaghetti at a film study. We were doing film. Who had ever heard of that? We had never had film. The first time we sat down, we all looked at each other and thought, "What is this guy showing us?" In the early '60s, nobody studied film. Not in our high school. We had never seen that. And he was paying for those films out of his pocket. Everything was out of his pocket. Everything he and Lorita did for us was out of his pockets. The films. The Kool-Aid. The oranges. The spaghetti, and beans, and cornbread (we were raised on that stuff), all of that came out of their pocket.

I saw a lot of kids who weren't involved in sports and didn't have the guidance that Coach gave us go in a wrong direction. I think when they took away neighborhood schools, they took away much of what we had. Bussing was great, but it took the juice from the neighborhood. It's ironic, because they did bussing because they thought it would improve things. But what it did was, it took away the juice, and it took away the teachers and coaches like Coach Myles.

I owe where I am right now to Coach Myles and Lorita. I wouldn't be there without them. I own a block and a-half in Kansas City. I am the only black person in the Midwest who owns his own storage facility and has a U-Haul franchise. I stayed in sports and for thirty years officiated football and basketball, high school and college. I knew sports, and I wanted to give back something, so I stayed with that. There are not enough people like Bill Myles in the inner city schools today. There was only one Coach Myles. There will never be another one.

Learning from Eddie: In 1941, when I was five years old, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and my brother Phil was born. One other thing had happened that year that would impact me as well. I just didn't know it at that time. Deep in the South, in Lincoln Parish in northern Louisiana, a new football coach was named at a historically black university. That new coach had no paid assistant coaches, no trainer to tape the players, and no one to

line the team's field. Fifty-six years later, that coach would finally retire from that same university, as the second winningest coach in Division I-AA college football history.

That coach would retire with a record of 408 wins and only 165 losses and 15 ties. Those 408 wins would be more than Bobby Bowden's, more than Joe Paterno's, more than Bear Bryant's. That coach would best the wins of Woody Hayes, Tom Osborne, and Bo Schembechler. When he would retire, that coach would have sent more than two hundred players to the NFL and would have won nine black college football championships. He would have been elected to every Hall of Fame in which he was eligible. That coach, of course, was Eddie Robinson; the school was Grambling State University. And the impact on me was to help propel my career while head coach at Lincoln High.

I first met Eddie at clinics, but I got to know him personally at the NAIA basketball tournaments in Kansas City. Since Eddie was also Athletic Director at Grambling, he would come to watch those tournaments. Buck Buchannan, a friend of mine, was playing for the Kansas City Chiefs, and Buck introduced me to Eddie.

Eddie would sit up in the balcony of the Municipal Auditorium. I was teaching at that time, and I would use sick days off school for the chance to go and learn from Eddie Robinson. I would take big sacks of sandwiches down there, and Eddie and I would sit up in the stands eating sandwiches, talking football, and watching basketball. Imagine being able to sit there as a young coach, side by side, and pick the brain of the great Eddie Robinson. I learned a lot from Eddie, but the most important thing he ever taught me was his saying, "It's up to the coach to find a position for the boy."

Eddie taught me with a true story, telling me about a player who came to Grambling as a seventeen-year-old light-skinned Negro. They called him "the big red boy." Now that big red boy was six-foot-seven and 287 pounds. He had run a 10.2 hundred-yard dash. Yet Eddie explained that it used to bother him that the player was messing up everything. He thought, "I've been coaching longer than this boy has been in the world and he's messing up all my plays." Eddie would ask the assistant coaches after practice, "What about this big red boy from Birmingham?"

"Oh, Coach, he steps in the bucket." "He winds up wrong." "He steps wrong." "He uses the wrong hand on this technique." "He can't do anything but tackle."

Eddie told me that this went on for two or three days. Finally, Eddie said to the coaches, "I'll tell you what. You all give me that guy over on defense, and you can have these two other guys. Then you find me two more just like him, two more that *can't do anything but tackle!*" Of course, Eddie was talking about Buck Buchannan, the "big red boy" who himself introduced me to Eddie. Everybody who knows football has heard of Buck, heard what he achieved at Grambling, and what he did later in the AFL. Buck was a defensive starter for Grambling from that day on, and in 1963 was the first person drafted in the American Football League, the number one pick of the Chiefs! Buck was the first player from a black college ever drafted number one overall in professional football! Buck would help the Chiefs win Super Bowl IV, be selected second team all-time AFL, play in six AFL All-Star Games, play in two

Pro Bowls, and in 1990 be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. All this was achieved by a guy who stepped in the bucket, used his wrong hand, and "couldn't do anything but tackle."

Eddie then told me a story about another guy. He thought this guy was a whale of a player and they tried him at center, but he couldn't play. They put him at guard. Same problem. They put him at linebacker. Eddie told how the assistants would say, "Coach, he's just a lemon, he can't play." Eddie explained that they finally moved him to defensive tackle. Well, that kid was named Alphonse Dotson and he was selected as an All-American in 1964. On top of that, he was a second-round NFL draft pick out of Grambling University and played five seasons in the NFL. Pretty good for a lemon.

It's Up to the Coach: In the winter of 1966, I was coming home from one of those clinics at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, driving alone up the highway back to Kansas City and thinking about what Eddie had taught me. I said to myself, "We have this kid coming up from the junior varsity. He's playing guard. He ran a 10.0 flat last year as a sophomore and is probably faster than that now. He's 5'10", 165 pounds, and he's playing guard on my junior varsity. I gotta get this guy in a different position. This guy should be carrying the ball. I gotta get that kid to fullback." I was taking Eddie's "it's up to the coach to find a position for the boy" and putting it together. The guy's name was Robert Buford, and I decided on that drive I was going to move him to fullback. I decided that at 10.0 flat he was too fast to be playing guard.

That summer at the start of his junior year, Robert Buford moved to fullback. There was just one problem. Buford couldn't block the end. The end got to pushing Robert back, busting up our plays. Buford got three fifteen-yard penalties in the first game we played. I told the guys, "That will kill us. It's half the football field." James Monroe, the big two-hundred-pound guy that had played fullback my first year, was now my tailback in that same backfield. I had moved him to tailback to make room for Robert Buford at fullback, and because I thought Monroe was going to be a great tailback. But Monroe wasn't hitting the holes. I said to Monroe, "Can't you see that hole? Can't you see the soft spot?"

James Monroe said, "Coach, I didn't see it." My grand experiment just wasn't working. After that first game, one day in practice Monroe got hurt and couldn't go. When that happened, I put Robert Buford back at tailback instead of at fullback. Zoom. Buford just ran like crazy. He hit the hole and was gone. Several times. He would spot the holes and break off the blocks. Monroe couldn't hit these holes, but Buford could hit them every time. After watching this for a while, I asked Buford, "What do you see?"

"Coach," he told me, "I just go to the biggest hole."

"You see more than one?" I asked.

"Yeah."

James Monroe couldn't see one hole, and here Robert Buford was seeing two or three. The next day I still had it in my mind that I was going to make Buford my fullback, and Monroe my tailback, and we were just going to beat up people. But before we went out, I asked the assistant coaches, "What about this Buford guy? What about moving him to tailback?"

"Oh, Coach," they said, "you can't do that. He can't play. You gotta stick with Monroe. You have to keep Buford at fullback. Monroe's your tailback. Buford is just doing that because Monroe has beaten those guys down. It was the end of practice. They are tired and all that. Monroe is the guy." They were not at all comfortable with me putting Buford back there. I said okay. This went on for two or three days.

Now Eddie Robinson and Frank Broyles had both told me stories where they had to move guys around and prove to the assistant coaches that was the right thing to do. It looked like I was going to have to do that, too. Finally, on the third day when they told me that, I replied, "Well, we're gonna find out because I'm going to start him off there today. The defense won't be tired when he's back there today. We're going to start off with Buford and see what he can do when the defense is fresh!"

I put him in and whoosh, he was gone! We never looked back. Robert Buford gained 950 yards for us that season at tailback. The next year he gained 960 yards and scored thirteen touchdowns. He ended up running a 9.7 hundred before he ever left high school. That got me started as a head coach, Robert Buford doing these things for our team. We started beating schools once I put him in my backfield.

Pride and the Porch: Of all the kids I coached, there is one player, William Lincoln, I think of most often. He was a star player for me, yet his story is gut wrenching and one begging to be told. Actually, William Lincoln is not his real name. But that is the pen name I am using to tell this story, out of respect for that player. Once you hear his story, you will understand why.

William Lincoln has something to teach all of you, just as he had something to teach me. When I look at William Lincoln, I think, "There but for the Grace of God go you or I."

I have told you one of the words I first used in coaching was pride. You gotta have pride. But William Lincoln changed that, and here's why.

I used to get the guys in the summertime around nine at night, and take them to the Dairy Queen. I bought them sundaes, so I could put weight on them. I figured they were not going to do much running that late and I could fatten them up, since a lot of these kids didn't have much in their refrigerators at home. Lincoln was one of those kids.

One evening, one of the mothers called me and told me I should be ashamed of myself. She told me this boy had asked her son if he could get a quarter from his mother because he was hungry. She related that all these boys talk about all day long is Coach Myles. "Coach Myles this, Coach Myles that, all day long," she said, yet here was this boy living under a house and starving. "He didn't have this and didn't have that," she railed, "and you're not doing anything about it." The young man she was talking about was William Lincoln. I didn't know that. So, I went right over and had a heart to heart talk with that mother about what she had told me. Later that night I got William Lincoln, and we rode around town with some of the other guys in my car. After a while, I purposely got rid of the other three guys, which left just William and me together in the car.

"William," I asked, "how come you didn't tell me?"

"Coach, you're always talking about pride," he answered. "Well, I've got pride. I didn't want you to know about it." From then on, I never used the word *pride* anymore as a coach. I was learning. The athletes were teaching me. They were getting me ready for future things. Getting me ready for Nebraska, getting me ready for Ohio State, getting me ready for the big stage, I guess. This young man, William Lincoln, was a guy who eventually would run the hundred in record time. I would make him into a star player. But he was living under a porch and starving.

I had a card I would give to my players at the beginning of the season. It had a place for their name, address, parents, and birth date. The card also asked them to put down what they wanted to be. I had always been interested in what my guys wanted to be. When I gave that card to William Lincoln at the beginning of the season, he put on his card that he wanted "to be a pimp." Then he turned it in.

Probably any other teacher at Lincoln High School would have jumped all over him about this. But when I read that card, I asked him, "Why do you want to be a pimp?"

"Pimps wear silk suits and drive Cadillacs, Coach," he answered. "You've just got a Chevy." Well, that hurt me. I did have a Chevy, a shiny 1962 Chevy. I mean, nobody had ever ridden in that car when I bought that car brand new three years earlier. Everybody thought we were sharp when I drove it. Yet this kid was telling me, "You just have a Chevy." The people who impressed this kid were pimps, because they wore silk suits and drove Cadillacs.

Other teachers at Lincoln High School might have thrown him out of class for saying he wanted to be a pimp. Not me. I knew from what the mother had told me. William's grandfather was a pimp, and that grandfather put him out of the house when his grandmother had died. William Lincoln lived under a porch his senior year. I would take him food. Sometimes I would give him some steaks from my freezer, and he would eat them all in one night. I asked him why he did that, and he told me, "Coach, you gotta eat it all; you don't know when your next meal is going to be." I got William a job at the school where he was sort of a janitor after practice, and before school.

William was what they called a "special" in school. I was angry with the principal about that, and I was fighting all kinds of battles for him as a coach. At that time, a "special" was a kid who was not going to get a high school diploma. I told the principal, and then the other teachers, "This kid's not dumb, he's not a special. He just can't read."

Their typical response was, "Well, you're dumb if you can't read." I tried to tell them, "If you can't read, there is no way you can pass the American History test, no way can you learn this, no way can you do that. If you can't read, you can't do any of that."

They asked me, "Why would you say he's not dumb?'

"Well, I've watched him shoot pool," I answered. The way he cut the paint off those pool balls and the angles he shot, he must have understood geometry. I told them that. "If you can shoot pool like he shoots pool," I said, "you evidently know geometry, you understand angles. He knows all of our plays, because I go over them on the field. He's picked up all our plays and never made any mental mistakes. He knows what to do." I tried to get the school to

retest him, but they would not, and I had a hard time trying to get over that. Because they would not retest this young man, I think the Kansas City School System did him a great injustice. I know that young man was not a special. He just could not read, and today he would likely be identified as dyslexic and given help. But this was the '60s.

Everybody laughed at me; but I was not the only one that thought that way. In 1968, William's story was told in *Sports Illustrated*. An article titled "The Black Athlete—A Shameful Story," by Jack Olson, examined the problem of young black men who came from poor educational backgrounds and were thrust into the athletic limelight. There was a series of six or seven stories, and William's was one of them. Olson states that William shows "not a hint of self-pity," that he saw his situation as normal.

William Lincoln probably cared more about me than any player I ever coached. When he would get in trouble, he would call me, and I would go down and get him out of the police station, or out of a jam. One time I told the school nurse, "I've given this guy three chances. My philosophy has always been, burn me once, I chalk it up to experience. Burn me twice and I am dumb; but I keep going back for him. I am dumb and cannot keep going back. But I do." I kept going back because I cared. One time I did let him sit for a day or so before I went down. I don't think anyone had ever been as happy to see me as William Lincoln was when I walked into that courtroom. As he was going in front of the judge, he looked over and saw me, and started smiling, like "Shucks, everything is cool now. Coach is here." I have never had anyone, anywhere, before or since, so glad to see me as when William Lincoln smiled at me that day in the courtroom.

After I left Kansas City, when I'd go back I would still see William Lincoln. He worked for the Water Department by going around bleeding fire hydrants and making an honest living. I sometimes wonder how William's life might have been different, had he been given a fair shake by the adults back then. If that gets me down, though, I wonder too how might it have been different if I had not been there for him? What if Eddie had not taught me to find a place for the boy? What if I had not given him food? What if I had not been there to bail him out of trouble? What if he had nott had football? Would he have gone in another direction? Would the gangs and drugs and the streets have gotten him? Would he be a pimp?

Of the hundreds of guys I have coached, he's the guy I will always remember. He's an example where a guy with a lot of strikes against him made it. He's an example where football made a difference in a kid's life. He had a job, and last I heard was doing well.

William Lincoln played on the same football team as Frank White, who became a Major League Baseball player and eventual Gold Glove winner. They both had tremendous athletic ability and played together for the same school. They both had professional athletic potential. Yet for one the ball bounced lucky; for the other, not so. Why? Part of it was that Lincoln High School and society cheated William Lincoln. We did not help that youngster.

Firing Gary Black: I remember another Gary, too. Gary Black was the quarterback on that first team, along with Gary Brown. Gary led the league

in passing his junior season and was a blue chip quarterback. When he came back for his senior year, big things were expected. That is, until I had to kick him off the team. I fired him, so to speak.

Gary thought we couldn't win without him. He was late coming to practice and doing other things that I couldn't have. I was trying to build discipline, a work ethic, and a team concept. How can you do that when the guy who is supposed to be your leader, your quarterback, isn't buying into it? Not only was Gary not buying into it, he was flaunting it. Yet he was my best player. I lost a lot of sleep. I didn't want to get rid of Gary, so I wrestled with that decision and agonized over what to do. In the end, it was one of those defining moments that made Gary—and made me.

When I contemplated dismissing Gary Black, I thought back to my mother, and through her thing about prayer I agonized what to do. I wrestled long and hard with that decision. I was affecting a young man's life. "Am I booting this guy because I can?" I asked myself. "Or am I not firing him because I don't think we can win without him?" I battled over that, and tossed and turned a lot of sleepless nights. Finally, one day during fall camp, I had the guys up in the gym and said to them, "Gary Black is no longer a member of our football team. I'm firing him today. He's late coming to practice. He's not giving his all. He's not respecting our team, not respecting you, not respecting me. I have wrestled with this, and I think it is best for the team that we get rid of Gary Black. If anyone doesn't like it, you can see me downstairs in my office, or we can talk here."

I was afraid how the kids might act. But afterwards, the kids came down to my office in the locker room and said to me, "We were wondering when you were going to do it!"

Gary's mother got angry with me. She said they were going to transfer, and I had to tell her if they did that, he couldn't play at any other school in Kansas City. The thing was, Gary was such a hero at the school. Kids were eying Gary and thinking, well someone has finally treated him like everybody else. They felt good that he got his sails knocked out from under him. I didn't mean to do all that. I just wanted to teach him a lesson, that being on time meant something to me. Well, I did teach that lesson, as Gary Black explains in his own words:

> I once had my students write down five traits that defined a good person. The traits they came up with were, the person is a pioneer, the person is determined, the person is dependable, the person is honorable, and finally the person is trustworthy. Bill Myles is all those and then some. Coach was that type of special person to me.
>
> That might surprise you since Coach kicked me off the team. But that was the best thing that ever happened to me. Coach used to give us a night practice the week before the season opened. Coach was over on the defensive side that night. Of course, he knew the schemes he was sending at me, and I was just getting knocked on my butt at quarterback. Then he came over to the offensive side and asked me a question. I thought he said, "Can't you see what they are doing?" Now the linebackers were blitzing and switching on me, and I was so

mad. I snapped back, "I can't see myself. I've got no mirror in front of me."

Coach didn't say a thing. Everyone got real quiet. Then he said, "That's it, practice is over." That's all he said. Everyone got back on the bus and went back over to Lincoln.

On Monday morning, all the guys were coming to me and saying, "Coach cleared your locker out." Now I was a top athlete, All-City quarterback and all of that. So I just played it cool with them. "I'm a senior," I boasted. "They need me. They can't kick me off the team." Outwardly, I played it real cool. Then a little later, I snuck down and checked the locker room. Dang if my locker wasn't cleared out! Surely there was a mistake! I went looking for Coach Myles. "Coach," I said, "all my stuff is out of my locker!"

"Yeah, son," was all he said. He paused a minute and then went on, "You're not giving me respect. You're my leader, and when they see my leader doing that, then everybody is doing it. Good luck!"

"Oh, Coach," I cried. "I'm sorry. I apologize!"

It didn't faze Coach. "I got a game to get ready for. I don't know what to tell you. Stay in shape, I guess," he grumbled as he went out the door.

I stood there with my mouth open, and my jaw to my knees, wondering what the heck to do. Of course, I ran home and told my mom. Well, that didn't help. I didn't know it, but he had already talked to her about what he was going to do. Mom just shrugged, "Well, you know he treats you like you were his boy, and you love him like he's your father. He must think it is best for you. All you can do is go keep apologizing to him."

Of course, I went back to school and was apologizing all week long, before school, in the hallways, after school. I must have apologized to Coach Myles a hundred times that week. "Stay in shape, throw the ball, run around the track," was all he would say.

When the team would practice I was out there too, running and throwing the ball. We had this tire and I was throwing the ball through that tire from 40 yards out, trying to remind Coach what I could do. Everybody on the team was seeing this of course, so Coach blew the whistle. He took the team down to the other end of the field to practice. On top of that, he had them turn their backs on me! Psychologically, he was tearing me apart.

I was a teenager. I didn't know what was going on. All I knew was that I wanted to play and I was sorry. That first game of the season was a non-conference game against Manual. We lost that game. I snuck over to the field to see how they were doing. I was embarrassed and ashamed because I had gotten kicked off the team, but I still had to be there pulling for my teammates. I could just see the top of the scoreboard to follow the game, because I was half-a-block away, hiding behind a tree. We lost that game 12-7, and when it was over I ran and went home. I've never told anyone about that to this day.

That Monday I showed up again, and Coach let me practice in my

gym clothes. We were going to play Kansas City Sumner, and by the end of the week, I was back in uniform. But I was still second string. Lo and behold, Coach put me in at the end of the first quarter. He knew exactly what he was doing. He knew I could run the plays. He knew I could check off on those defenses. I threw a touchdown that game and ran a bootleg in for another. The next morning the headlines were, *Gary Black Returns!*

That was the best thing that could have happened to me. I still see it today. Athletes get on a pedestal; everybody puts them up there, and they think they are good. They start believing it and start doing things they shouldn't do. They get twisted from being a leader to being outlandish and lose track of things.

Coach's method was to keep it simple. Everybody from the top person to the last person understood what was going on. He really knew how to unify. The whole team would hear him say something we were going to do, and everybody knew what it was. Through practice, through repetition, through his commitment, he taught everybody what needed to be done on the field and off. He could break it down so simple.

Coach came around in a historic era. Sometimes spots in your life, you remember where you were. On November 22, 1963, I was in my ninth grade civics class when someone called our teacher out in the hall. She stepped out and in a second, stepped back in with the history lesson of that day. The U. S. President had been assassinated.

It was quite a feeling because at that time I was thinking everything was getting better in America. Sixty years ago when I was eleven years old, I went downtown for my mother to pay the gas bill at the Power and Light building. She gave me fifty cents. It was the first time I had ridden the bus down by myself. I went into Woolworths to get a glazed donut and was getting ready to sit down. The lady said, "You can't sit down." I was trying to make sure I heard her right, and she said, "You can't sit."

"Why?" I asked.

"You're colored," she answered. A shot went through me. My father had passed away that fall, so I went straight home and told my mother. "Don't worry about that," she told me. "They are the ones who have the problem. Your color is a beautiful color and always will be. Keep your head up and don't worry about prejudice, which is an ill in the world."

During that period, people like Coach lived there, taught there, and raised their families there. They worked with the kids, and even though there was racism, and things that were not right, you still—within that community—were comforted, nurtured, and secure and safe. You could look to leaders like Coach and know that everything was okay.

I ended up earning two master's degrees—sociology and education—and went on to teach school in California. I was chairperson of the largest special education department in the San Diego City

school district. Every time I think about doing things, my mind kind of goes to Coach Myles, and what he would do. When I have tried to follow what he would do, it has come out pretty good. Here's just one example. I would go to Coach's office almost every morning. One morning he told me, "I broke the lamp on my bed stand last night. I knocked it off."

"What happened?" I asked.

"I was dreaming," he told me. "I was dreaming that you got busted up and I didn't have you any more. I dreamt you couldn't play."

"Boy," I exclaimed, "Coaching must be the hardest job in the world."

"Nope," he said, "marriage is. To make it last, you've got to work at it 24-7." It was good advice. When I went to Coach and Lorita's fiftieth wedding anniversary gala, I thought back to the day Coach told me that.

In 2007, I asked Coach Myles to come back to Kansas City and speak at our forty-year class reunion. At first he didn't want to. Debbie and Lorita were on him until he finally agreed. Coach didn't know what we had planned for that night, until he got up to speak. Before the event, I went down to City Hall and asked them to present him with the Key to Kansas City. They remembered Coach Myles and knew he was a pioneer and role model. There was not one question raised, and he was a Kansas City native that had long deserved recognition. When Bill got up to speak that night, he reminded me, and everybody, about the time he kicked a guy off the football team. When he was done, that same guy got up and surprised him with the Key To Kansas City.

Gary missed one game. He didn't practice. But Gary left out one thing in his story. He also served some other punishments that remain between just him and me. I don't blame him. I would forget those too. He then had to get up in front of the team and apologize. That was the tougher thing for him to do, tell his teammates he would start at the bottom and earn his way back. I helped him with some things he needed to say, but it was up to them to vote him back on the team. Gary was nervous because he really didn't know if they would do that. But they did.

When he came back, we made him work his way back up from the bottom. Eventually, we moved him back to quarterback, and he led us to a victorious season. But the victory wasn't on the football field. It was what that incident did for Gary Black, and all the lives that Gary has touched since. He's a fine man, a teacher, and a public servant I am proud of. That incident that made Gary also did something for me. From then on I had no trouble with the kids. They said, "Man, this guy kicked the All-City quarterback off his team." I never had any more trouble with anybody after that.

The Golden Glove: Frank White was another of my football players who went on to become famous, but in a sport other than football. Frank played tight end, but his hands were what made him famous! Frank became a Major

League Baseball player and long-time second baseman for the Kansas City Royals. Frank was their second baseman when they won the World Series. He played in several Major League All-Star Games and today owns a lot of the Royals records. Frank was a five-time All-Star. His biggest feat, though, was winning the Gold Glove Award not once but eight times! Frank and George Brett set a major league record when they appeared together in 1,914 games, a record that stood until Alan Trammell and Lou Whitaker broke it in 1995.

Frank White is such a legend in Royals history. They retired his number and in 2004 they dedicated a statue of Frank outside of Kauffman Stadium, the Royals' baseball park. When they dedicated that statue, Frank called and asked me to give the dedication speech. The Royals flew Lorita and me to Kansas City. I thought it was probably one of the great honors that I have had in my life. Of all the people Frank knew—after playing eighteen years in the Major Leagues—when he was getting a statue of himself put in front of the stadium where he played, he asked me, his old high school coach, to come back and introduce him at the unveiling. I asked Frank to explain in his own words why he did that:

> I grew up in Kansas City where Bill was my football and basketball coach my junior and senior year at Lincoln High. The one thing Bill taught us was never to settle for less. We had this high hill behind our school, and after football games, even if we won, if we didn't play particularly well, he would get us off the bus and head us towards that hill. We would have to crab up and down that hill on all fours. Bill was a competitor but at the same time he taught. He was a guy who not only coached you hard on the field but also coached you hard off the field.
>
> In 2006, the Kansas City Royals erected a statue of me at Royals Stadium, and I asked Bill to come and speak. It was pretty impressive. I've been a coach and a baseball manager; as a coach, I think you never really understand a lot of times how you affect someone's life. Even though I wasn't his star player, I listened well, and when I got into baseball and started having some success with the Royals, I would always think back to some of the standards that Bill set for us. If you want to win, it just takes a little bit more to be a champion; that was one of Bill's theories that I heeded. Bill Myles never gave up.
>
> I have rubbed shoulders with a lot of famous people in my baseball career, and could have asked any one of them to introduce me. I chose Bill Myles because he was community; he was a person who made a big impact on my life. When you think back, as a young man, obviously you have your parents first, but then you think about your coaches, about the people who touch you to say, "You never know, just keep trying hard. The day that you want to give up could be the day that somebody is watching you."
>
> You always admire how your coaches carry themselves and how community-minded they are. Even though Coach has been gone from Kansas City for almost forty years now, he still takes the local black paper, the *Kansas City Call*, so that he can keep up with the commu-

nity and the people he has coached and taught. Bill has never forgotten where he came from. In this day and age, where more people are running away from their history than embracing their history, that says an awful lot about a guy.

He basically took whatever he had to go through as a young man, and whatever his parents instilled in him, and just transferred it to coaching his basketball and football games. That left such a big impression. When I learned he left Southeast and went to Nebraska, I was just elated because that wasn't happening to black coaches. When I heard he went to Ohio State, and then when he became the Associate A.D. it was just getting better and better for him. Occasionally we would talk, and just watching the way he progressed made a big impression on me. Bill was one of those guys who wanted to go as high as he could go, and that inspired me. Yet Bill had this strong sense of education and stayed where I thought he could do the best job, in high school and college. He stayed where he thought he could mentor young men who are just starting their lives out. That's what makes a good coach.

You are always being issued challenges, and the question is, are you going to embrace them or shy away? Bill had that calming type voice of reason, that voice which said, "Hey, this is what I think you need to do to be successful, and this is what I think you need to do to get this job done." He said it in a way that we believed him, and that's what makes a good coach. A good coach is, first of all, believable, and as players we have to know that we trust them; we have to know that they care; we have to know that they are committed. When that is the case, there is not too much you wouldn't do for a coach. It wasn't easy for Bill during the times that he coached me at Lincoln. We didn't have the best facilities or equipment. Our field was good enough to practice on but not good enough to play on. Our gymnasium had maybe one foot between the brick wall and the end lines so we didn't play any varsity games at home either.

Bill could give a Hallelujah pep talk. When he spoke at my statue unveiling, he was so impressive and what made it so neat was that a lot of people from Lincoln High School were at that dedication. As he was speaking, you could hear them in the audience shouting, "We love you, Bill," and "We miss you, Bill." He made an impression on a lot of people. I don't think as coaches we realize that until sometimes later on in life. It has happened to me as a coach, and it is a good feeling. All you want to do is instill the best values in people as you can and hope that they become lifelong lessons.

When Bill was growing up, Kansas City was not different for black people than a lot of places. But from a sports standpoint, and a music standpoint, K.C. was the place to be. Eighteenth and Vine. That was the place. The Monarch baseball players, all the jazz musicians; that was the place. It was a party. Satchel Paige only lived about three blocks from us. His kids went to Lincoln and Bill probably taught history to Robert and Linda Paige. I remember sitting in the stands

watching Satchel pitching three innings against the Boston Red Sox. After Jackie Robinson broke the barrier, we would meet a lot of the Negro League players that still lived in Kansas City.

It starts with your family and how you are brought up. If they don't aspire for you to go higher, then I think you settle down. I think with Bill, he saw he could not only be an educator, but also coach. I think he looked at that and said, "Here's a Satchel Paige, doing what he is doing in the Negro Leagues where he is not allowed to play with the white players. Here is Joe Louis who fell on hard times with the IRS, and who had done so much for the country, but then when he fell the country wasn't there for him. I think you look at these little things and learn from them, and you make that part of what you're trying to do. It gives you that sense of, okay, once you achieve, then you have to continue to achieve. Because once you get high enough, if you fall, there is nobody able to pick you up. You have to take care of yourself when you do that; then you are able to take care of everybody else. Coach Myles has done that.

When I introduced Frank at that unveiling, I told the crowd where he came from, where he lived, how he stayed out of trouble. I told them how he hit the winning basket for me in a couple of basketball games, how he caught passes for me, how he was just a great guy coming from the situation that he had. You knew he was a good athlete; but what's more, you saw Frank had a lot of class about him. He is a quality guy. Buck O'Neil was also at the unveiling of Frank's statue, and Buck and I talked about Frank and spent time together that day. When I would go back to Kansas City, I would go down to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, and Buck and I would sit there, talking baseball, talking Kansas City, and talking about all the Frank Whites we both had coached in our lives.

Kids without dads. Kids from Boys Town. A kid living under a porch. A future Major Leaguer. By the end of 1967, after coaching five seasons at Lincoln High, I thought I had seen it all and heard it all. Little did I know what was to come, as the page on the calendar turned to 1968.

Chapter 14

SUMMER OF DISCONTENT

In 1968, in addition to coaching, I was also teaching American History at Lincoln High. I sure had a lot of current events material. That summer of '68 has been labeled "the Summer of Discontent." To start, we were coming off the race riots of 1967—Newark, Detroit, Tampa, Buffalo, among the biggest. Early that winter, public opinion also began to shift against the Vietnam War.

Our country was being torn apart by the War, and at the same time coming to grips with racial strife. *In the Heat of the Night* received an Oscar that year as Best Picture for Rod Steiger and Sidney Poitier's portrayals of a murder investigation in a small racist town in Mississippi. Katherine Hepburn also won an Oscar for her role alongside Spencer Tracy and Sidney Poitier in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner.* As if Vietnam and the Civil Rights Revolution were not enough, that same year Mike Nichols was awarded an Oscar for directing Dustin Hoffman's portrayal of the sexual revolution in *The Graduate.* Simon and Garfunkel summed up 1968 when they sang, "Time it was, and what a time it was, it was . . . "

The year began with the Battle of Khe San and then the Tet Offensive. In February, police officers in South Carolina fired into a crowd protesting segregation at a bowling alley. Three were killed. March brought the My Lai massacre of scores of Vietnamese civilians—women, children, and the elderly—by American troops. Then, on March 31, President Johnson announced he would not seek reelection. We did not lack events to discuss in my class. All of that was prelude for what was to come. I had never in my life wanted to leave a football field, but soon there would be a time I wanted to and yet could not.

He's Dead! The night of April 4, 1968, I was taking some players home from basketball practice. If I close my eyes, I can still see it. We were at a traffic light on the corner of Thirty-First and Indiana, a block from Central High, when the news came over the radio. The players in my car said, "Martin Luther King has just been shot." We drove another couple of blocks.

"He's dead," they gasped.

It was shocking. My first reaction was that we had lost a visionary. I knew that Dr. King was a leader, that he was a bright man. I considered him my leader. I knew what he was doing was dangerous. With him being nonviolent, there was no threat that you might get hurt bothering him. Still it surprised me. It caught me off guard that he was shot like that. It was a sad, tragic time for me and for our country. We lived out in the Sheraton Estates neighborhood, in Southeast Kansas City, where we had just built a new house

high up on a hill. As I looked down over Kansas City, I could just see the city burning. They were already starting the fires.

In the following days, while we were at school, people in the community started rioting. If you were not there, or didn't live through it, it is so hard to describe. In 2002, Joe Miller wrote an article about the Kansas City schools in the *Kansas City Pitch.* I recently found it on the Web. Titled "The Long Walk Home," the article captured that moment better than I can. The scene is Central High, the very same Central High where my players and I first heard the news. Some students at Central were upset that they had to go to school during King's funeral, while schools in Kansas City, Kansas did not. Therefore, they started leaving campus, and were joined by other schools in the neighborhood. This is when the violence and chaos broke out, resulting in a three-day riot.

While this bedlam was going on, people who did not belong were coming to Lincoln High, and firecrackers were going off, things like that. We heard gunfire. It was chaos. People were panicking. Everybody that is, except the coach inside of me. I suggested to the principal, "Let's take them out into the stadium, behind the school to the football field. We can keep them safe there."

So we took them out. The whole school. It was early in the day, before noon. We took everyone into the football stadium, where all the teachers, principals, and coaches were working to calm the students. It was a matter of having everybody at one place, rather than all over the school. We talked with the kids in small groups, and explained why they couldn't leave. We had a fence so it was hard for them to leave and hard for anyone from the outside to get in. They could have climbed the fence at one end, down by the Blues Stadium, but I think the youngsters understood. I mean, people were shooting guns, and the streets were not a safe place to be.

Then all of a sudden, the police had us surrounded, and they wouldn't let us leave. They were afraid that if the kids left, we might lose some of them, that they might be killed in the rioting. There I was on a football field, and I was thinking, "Dadgum, I can't even leave." Later on that day, we were able to let them go. We did it in small groups of eight to ten, rather than all 1,800 at once, or even big groups, because a big group could get something started on its own. There is always a leader and the leader could lead you wrong. We were afraid that if we let them all go, something else might happen, so we released a few at a time.

King's assassination was followed by rioting not only in Kansas City, but also in cities elsewhere like Baltimore, Chicago, and Washington D.C. The damages: Chicago, two hundred buildings burned with losses of $10 million; Baltimore, 1,200 fires costing $12 million; and our nation's capital, 1,200 buildings worth over $27 million. It didn't end with Martin Luther King, Jr.'s death, either. The violence continued. On June 5th, Sirhan Sirhan shot Bobby Kennedy. In August of that summer, riots occurred in Chicago at the Democratic National Convention. It was a volatile year in a volatile decade.

Making A Difference: Because of all the rioting, later that summer of '68, we started what would become the National Youth Sports Program, or NYSP

as it came to be known. The NYSP became a national summer program for inner-city youth, but this program was conceived in Kansas City. The black coaches came up with the idea. We knew we had to do something to turn things around, to keep the kids off the streets, to give them some hope.

A group of coaches—including Don Hudson, Sylvester Harris, and Bill Herron from Manual, plus myself and the guys who coached with me at Lincoln—got together and developed this idea. We wrote it up and sent it to Washington D.C. The Federal gGovernment liked it, and they gave us the funding to try it. The NCAA and the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports agreed to pilot the NYSP concept. I don't know that NYSP is what it was called in the beginning, but that is what it became.

In 1968, the program started in three locations: Kansas City, Ohio State, and Southern Cal. These three were the pioneers, but it originated with the Manual and Lincoln coaches in Kansas City at the time. Ohio State and Southern Cal also did it on their campuses that summer as a pilot, and those programs were successful, but we were the originators. Of course, in Kansas City we did not have a university to help us. USC and OSU ran it on campus, but we were the men who wrote it up and sent it to Washington, and we ran it in Kansas City. The goal was to keep the kids off the streets, and to provide sports activities, as well as an educational component. After that first summer, the NYSP took off from these three pilots. In 1969, the program spread across the country when the White House announced the federal government was committing $3 million to establish a sports program for economically disadvantaged youth, and that it was to be called the National Youth Sports Program, or NYSP. President Nixon himself announced the NYSP program with these four objectives:

- Expand the opportunities for disadvantaged youth to benefit from sports-skill instruction, engage in competition, and improve their physical fitness.
- Help young people acquire good health practices, help them become better citizens, and acquaint them with career and educational opportunities by using facilities of higher education.
- Provide a combination of employment and on-the-job training in sports instruction and administration.
- Serve disadvantaged areas in the major metropolitan centers of the United States and other areas of need.

The NYSP required an educational component. We put that in the proposal when we wrote it up and sent it to Washington. Once a week, buses would take the kids out to the University of Missouri at Kansas City. These kids had never seen a college. Local celebrities like Amos Otis, the center fielder for the Kansas City Royals at the time, came and talked to the kids. Amos was a local hero at the time. He once stole five bases in one game for the Royals, a baseball feat that had not been accomplished since 1926. Buck Buchannan, star of the Kansas City Chiefs football team, was another speaker. People would come in and talk to the kids about vocational careers. Maybe a

beautician and a caterer talked to the girls, and a brick mason or a mechanic talked to the boys. We would have someone come in and teach them first aid. We would have people talk to them about other occupations. The group had to sit and listen, and then we fed them a lunch, gave them something healthy to eat—which might have been the only nutrition some of those kids got that day.

As I said, our goal that summer was simple: to keep the kids off the streets. If you lived through it, you know why. In the midst of all the violence, we tried to keep the youngsters out of trouble. What I tried to do in the sports part was tire the guys out. We had the kids playing basketball and swimming. I would have them race and make them do the butterfly, trying to tire them out, so they would be too tired to go out at night and burn things. Honest to goodness, that was my strategy. Afterwards, we would have the whole group up in the gym and talk to them.

I should say, rather, that I would have the Twenty-Third Street gang up there talking to them. The Twenty-Third Street gang would come over from noon to about four o'clock, and the Vine Street gang would come about 5:15. Now, the Vine Street gang and the Twenty-Third Street gang were not going to be there together. One wasn't going to come while the other was still there. We didn't plan that separation. The kids did that themselves. They just were not going to be there together, because if they were there together, there was going to be a war. These were the kind of kids we were trying to save.

Don't Bother Ben! We had a place in the neighborhood on the corner of Twenty-Seventh and Prospect named Ben's Market. Troublemakers were burning down places at night. Ben was Jewish, and they were mad at the Jews. One day that summer, I was afraid they were going to burn down Ben's Market. You know those corner markets of that day. The little neighborhood stores. The groceries were higher there, of course, but they would give credit and sometimes that was the only way families could have something to eat; so I said in my talk that day, "Now look. Ben's a great guy. We do not want to burn his place down or anything like that. When your mama does not have money, she can go to Ben's and Ben will let her have groceries on credit. Ben will help your mama feed you when she does not have anything for you to eat. There are times when Ben is the only thing between you and being hungry." I told them that day, "Stay away from Ben's." Ben was good to the neighborhood, and I was truly afraid for his market.

I must have made my point. The next day I came back, and many buildings in the block were burned down—*everything except Ben's market*. They listened to me. Everything around it was burned, but there stood Ben's, left standing all by itself. They did not bother Ben's. Ben was a great guy. He let Mama have milk and eggs when she did not have any money, so they did not burn Ben's. It is standing there today. All those other places were burned down, but when I go back to Kansas City, well, there is Ben's Market. Those kids listened. Of course afterwards I thought, "Shucks, I saved Ben, but daggone, I didn't think to talk about everybody else."

Kansas City was never the same after that summer. I go back to the old neighborhoods, and in some places, there is still nothing where the

neighborhoods burned. Where once there was a community and businesses with neighbors who watched out for each other's kids, well, it all has changed. You cannot blame it all on the riots, of course, but that decade was when things began to change.

The NYSP program did good things. The program continued for thirty-nine years, and in 2005, there were NYSP programs on 202 campuses across the country. Unfortunately, in 2007 all federal funding for the program was cut. In just two years, the number of programs nationally dropped from 202 to 49, and that trend is continuing. I am told that today it is down to 31. I am proud that, at least of this writing, Ohio State is one of the few schools that has made the decision to continue the program with its own funding. Renamed the LIFE Sports Camp, the OSU program still gives needy kids nutritious meals, a free physical exam, and teaches physical fitness and life skills.

Many universities are struggling to keep this program going since it is hard without government funding. I look at the childhood obesity problem in this country, the crime and violence in inner cities, the young children with poor nutrition. I look at the lack of males in the lives of our young black men—our young poor of any color, really—and the cost we pay to incarcerate just one of those youngsters gone astray. And I wonder, what better way could our nation spend its treasure than on something like NYSP that can help prevent those things? I shake my head when we know things that work, and we are still fighting for them today, just as I was that long hot summer of '68 in Kansas City, Missouri.

Yes, in 1968 change was in the air. It was not only a change in society. Soon there would be change in my life, too, which brings us to the next fork in the road on my winding journey.

Chapter 15

A TIGER RULES THE KNIGHTS

The 1968 season concluded my seventh year of high school coaching. I had gone from 7-20 my first three years as an assistant, to 21-15-1 in four years as a head coach at Lincoln. I had helped prepare a Manual team that had not won in eighteen years for an eventual City Championship. I had taken a Lincoln team that had only one winning season in eight years to three winning seasons in four years. Change was in the air that tumultuous year of 1968, and I was about to be swept up in it.

Knighted: In 1969, my success and all that time I had spent with Cecil Patterson paid off! Coach Patterson told me that he was getting ready to retire, that he was going to a private school, Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington, Missouri.

Coach told me early in the spring that he was leaving Southeast; but they did not select a new coach until June, after school was out. It took a long time because there were so many applications. On the outskirts of Kansas City, Southeast was winning and many people wanted that job because of the strength of the program that Coach Patterson had built. Cecil was dominating the league then in large part because no one else ran the single-wing formation. You had to work especially hard to get ready for them; but I had an in. When Cecil decided to leave, he recommended me to be his replacement. I had never lost to him in my five years as head coach at Lincoln, and it was the first time in history that Lincoln had ever beaten Southeast. I was offered the job.

I accepted and in June of '69, I went to Southeast. It was a great job and a good move. You might wonder why I left Lincoln. I had invested time there, I had some things going there; it was my alma mater. As I told Jim Buford when I had a chance to go to Southeast the first time, "Lincoln was playing football because it was in season. Southeast played to win."

There was more. Southeast would be an easier job. At Southeast the parents were working. Most of the kids had both parents, and they were not missing meals like some kids at Lincoln. I had built some things at Lincoln, but all of that was in place at Southeast, where they had a real football tradition. Then, too, the schools were changing racially. When I was going to school, you lived with doctors and lawyers in the black community. When integration came, people like the doctors, lawyers, and teachers moved out to suburban areas. They moved out to the Southeast district and that was when "white flight" began. Some of the good teachers were leaving Lincoln as well. We had a teacher named Dr. Cameron who was an exceptionally smart person

and had gone to Harvard. The school district took him away. When integration came, the district took many of our good teachers and sent them to other schools. At Southeast, I would be working with integration, which was then becoming the norm in society. That would add to my resume, to my record; and when you are a young coach looking to better yourself and your family, when an opportunity like that is presented, well, you grab it.

Even so, it was hard to go. The Lincoln team members believed in me. They hung out around our house. I was close to them. It was the same way when I had left Manual. At both Manual and Lincoln, I had been in my players' homes. In some cases, I had taken them groceries so that here would be something in their refrigerators. I do not remember ever going into anybody's house and having to buy them groceries at Southeast. It was a middle class neighborhood.

There were also some families with means at Southeast. One of the kids I would coach there, Bruce Watkins, was the son of a big undertaker in Kansas City. When we would get a kid hurt in practice, and the kid would be lying on the ground, I would jokingly say to him, "Bruce, what are we going to do?"

"Just call *Chestnut-1-2300*," he would say, which of course was the phone number of the mortuary business that was in their ad running on TV.

At Lincoln, I had the problem of getting parents to take an interest. Not at Southeast. Bruce's grandmother called me out one time, because I told Bruce he could not dress since he was late to a practice. She told me he was late because she had him washing the funeral cars. His grandmother said, "It was my fault, I kept him." I had developed that kind of discipline everywhere I coached, because I thought I had to have it to win. I would leave the parking lot when the time came. When I got on the bus, we left. I have seen my athletes running across the parking lot as we were pulling out, and we left them. Their parents had to bring them to the game if they were going to play that day.

Southeast's big rival was Southwest. The Southwest kids were what the other city schools called the "Cake Eaters." They were the rich white kids at the time. The Southwest dads were the bankers, lawyers, etc. When I was at Lincoln High as a player, the kids at Southeast had dads who were electricians, telephone linemen, construction workers, and so forth. They worked hard, so they had money and financially were a little bit above the folks at Lincoln. They called Southwest the "Cake Eaters." That term tells you what others thought of Southwest. Southeast-Southwest was the big game for the Southside Championship with a trophy that went back and forth.

When I went to Southeast, I was the first black person to become a head football coach at a formerly all-white school in Kansas City. I was not the first black head coach at a formerly white school, because there were some in basketball. There were black head football coaches at Manual and Lincoln High Schools, but these were traditional black schools. Coach Wilkerson was the basketball coach at R.T. Coles when I was in school. Later he became head basketball coach at Central, which was a white school. Mr. Banks was the football coach at R. T. Coles; so there were black coaches, but none coaching football at a predominate white school. In that sense, I was a trailblazer. I broke that ceiling.

Southwest, Westport, Northeast, Van Horn, Paseo, and East—these all were predominate white schools, and all had white coaches, who were all very welcoming to me when I came into the white Interscholastic League. When I would later go to the next level, I received letters from all of them, congratulating me. I got a letter from the Northeast athletic director. The Southwest coach was complimentary, too. Coach Joe Mintner of Lillis, the Catholic School, gave me a party when I moved on. I learned a lot of football from those coaches. I was pretty outgoing and they probably thought I was an overbearing man, because I was always trying to get into their heads to find out everything. Of course, I was beating them, so I am sure some of them were glad to write those letters.

Black Knights: Lincoln High had been the Tigers, but when I got to Southeast, we were *Knights*. It was all modeled after King Arthur and the Knights. They did not have a student council; they had a Student Roundtable. There was a big round table out in the center of the hallway. The words "Courage, Honor, Chivalry" were carved on that table. That table was sacred. Nobody put books on it; nobody put anything on it. It was tradition. You did not touch it.

They did not have an assembly hall; they had the Great Hall. They never said boys and girls or students there. The principal addressed everyone as Knights and Ladies. They had these shields for each class on the wall of the "Great Hall." If you won the football championship, you put a football on that shield. If your class had the Kansas City Student Mayor for a day, there was a gavel on that shield. The accomplishments of each senior class were on that shield. Naturally, each class wanted its shield to stand out as the best.

Students were Pages first and did not become a Knight until they were a senior, unless you were crowned a Knight by your teammates on the football field. Someone would say, "This guy is a Knight because he made a great play." You could become a Knight as an underclassman that way, otherwise you were a Page your first three years.

When I arrived at Southeast it was 70-30, whites to blacks. Before I would leave, the ratio would turn around, and in three years it had completely reversed. During my time there, with the advent of busing and integration, "White Flight" hit the city. It was soon 60-40, blacks to whites. This happened in just three years.

That first year, the black parents came to me and wanted to change this "Knight" business. "We aren't Knights," they told me.

"No," I told them, "you've heard of the great Black Knights." That was true. In *Le Morte d'Arthur,* Thomas Malory wrote, "There sat a knight all armed in black harness, and his name was the Knight of the Black Laund." And in *Ivanhoe,* Sir Walter Scott has Richard the Lionhearted posing as a black knight to avoid detection. "So there are great Black Knights," I told them that evening, and I was able to convince them that at Southeast we were going to continue to be the Knights. We kept the Knights name and the traditions. Of course, I couldn't use the Tiger prayer so we used the Lord's Prayer.

I kept things rolling. Cecil Patterson had named his plays after people, mostly after girls. Well, when I got there, we numbered the plays, and

I introduced other new stuff. It was quite a change. Ironically, Patterson had prepared me to be his successor. For some reason, Cecil took a liking to me, and he had helped me out long before I went to Southeast. He even helped me while I was a competitor of his. As we would go to all the clinics I described, I would drive and Cecil would sit over there and spin stories. It was just us, this coach nearly forty years my senior and an eager listener. On these long drives I would ask him to tell me about his great players of the past. He could go on and on about all the football players who came out of Southeast. Because of that, when I got to Southeast, I knew what to do! I think back to those car rides—*the place you seek is seeking you.*

Walls Tumble: I mentioned the time my friend Jim Buford's team beat Jake Gaither's to win a national championship. That was the first of three indirect links I would have to the great Florida A&M coach. The second link occurred in the fall of 1969, the same year I went to Southeast as a young black coach at a white school. Jake didn't know me at the time, but I am sure he did know how I, and so many like me, were affected by what he did. Jake Gaither broke a barrier that fall that opened doors for all of us. The year was 1969, the date November 29, and the place was midfield in Tampa Stadium. On that Saturday night, it was reported Coach Fran Curci of the University of Tampa shook Jake Gaither's hand and told him, "Jake, this is bigger than I thought it would be."

"Not me," Jake is said to have answered.

Place was again at work that Saturday night, and not just in that place, not just in Tampa Stadium. Rather, that handshake reverberated across the country. Coach Curci and Coach Gaither shook hands that night to start the first interracial college football game ever played in the Deep South. The game pitted Gaither's Florida A&M Rattlers, one of the dominant black teams of that era, against Fran Curci's growing football power, the overwhelmingly white University of Tampa Spartans. Sure, it was a game that would show whether black teams could compete with white ones. But more importantly, it would test whether black and white spectators could coexist in the stands in a city suffering from race riots.

That handshake united two pioneers in a game whose time had come. For two years, Jake Gaither had been quietly seeking to play a white school. When Curci took over the Tampa program and tried to make it a power, Jake found an eager partner who saw the benefits a large crowd and national press coverage would bring to his up-and-coming program. In *Coaching Against the Wind*, a history of Florida A&M football, Eddie Jackson wrote, "It was a gamble and Jake took it." Jackson explained how if Florida A&M lost, everyone would say, "Jake's a good coach, but he's a good black coach."

Well, Florida A&M didn't lose. And my friend Eddie Robinson was in the stands that night to see them win that game 34-28. Afterwards Fran Curci graciously said of the Rattlers, "We were outplayed and outcoached."

On the eve of that game, Jake Gaither said to the *St. Petersburg Times*, "This is the end of an era, and I'm very glad it's come to a halt." At the time, as a young black coach at Southeast, I was thinking things were opening up. We had Jackie Robinson, we had Bill Willis. My younger brother Phillip had

been senior class president and a football captain at a recently integrated high school. All three of the Myles boys had gotten college degrees from a predominantly white school. Martin Luther King, Jr. had been killed, but we had gotten beyond the worst riots. It was five years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Things were beginning to open up.

I was aware some individuals were trying to do things, schedule these games, and break these barriers. Curtis McClinton was in the backfield over at Kansas. I saw Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri beginning to play white schools. A black was the leading rusher for Missouri at that time, a guy named Charlie Brown. Johnny Roland had played at Mizzou. Russell Washington had gone there from Southeast. But that was Missouri and Missouri was different, Missouri was a border state. This game was Florida! This was the Deep South, the last bastion of athletic segregation in the country. The wall had fallen there, just as the door had opened for me at Southeast. It was now up to me to walk through that door. Like Eddie Robinson said, I wanted to be known as a good coach, not a good black coach. And when Jake Gaither beat Tampa, I saw I could be.

The Talk: In 1969, our son Billy had turned five years old and by then was tagging along with me everywhere. He was going with me to clinics, to the spring game down at the University of Missouri. We would go down to Liberty, Missouri, to the Kansas City Chiefs practices and to the Chiefs games. Like many sons, he wanted to be just like his dad. He was my little student manager and would take care of my oranges on the sidelines and things like that. He just followed me everywhere. Every kid should have that opportunity—except for a couple of events!

Even though things were starting to change, society wasn't fully there yet. And because of that, one time Billy was with me during an unfortunate incident that turned into a teachable moment. The police stopped us, made me put my hands on the car, frisked me, and all of that. Billy was just a little guy, and he kept asking, "What's the matter, Daddy, what's the matter?" Well, it turned out that there was some type of criminal on the loose, and it was reported he was a black guy. So they were stopping every black. It was crazy. The man they caught turned out to be about five-foot-eight, and I was six-foot-two and probably 225 pounds—yet they stopped me!

Of course, I did not feel good with that happening in front of my son; but I tried to explain to him, "These people are wrong. They need to grow up. You are safe and everything is all right." It was one of those bonding moments between a father and a son; and it was the opportunity to have what blacks of my parents' generation often called "The Talk." Following is Lorita's story that explains why in those days parents had that conversation with their children, and what was said to them.

> In the days after the 1968 Martin Luther King riots, maybe a week or so later, they were still stopping blacks on the streets. Bill's brother had given Billy a little toy machine gun, and I took it away from him because we did not buy guns for him to play with. Billy wanted to take

it with him in the car with his dad, but I said, "Absolutely not, they will think you have something real and come after you."

You were always aware of the challenge blacks of our generation had. How did you prepare your children for that? How did you teach your son or your daughter to be strong, to be brave, to move ahead, and not to put themselves in situations that could get them hurt or even killed, yet still feel good about who they are? I remember once little Billy was watching a Martin Luther King program and he asked me, "Mama, why do white people hate black people so?" How do you answer that? What do you say to a child? I tried to explain to him that it wasn't everybody, and that we wanted him to grow up not full of hate, but rather full of love for all people and have pride in being a beautiful, handsome, young black man. Of course as we were writing this book, the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin occurred. We as parents still have to prepare our young people to deal with some of the stereotypes.

There was another time Billy was on the sidelines for a game with Central High. When we beat Central, they didn't like it, so after the game some shooting went on. I was out in the middle of the field shaking the Central coach's hand. I had my Southeast jacket on with a big *S* on it. When I heard the shots, I thought to myself, "This *S* doesn't stand for Superman!" I ran off the field and Lorita hollered that she had Billy with her as she ran, too. Except Billy had pulled away, to run back on the field and get my cooler of oranges. That was more important to him than getting to safety, and Lorita had to go after him.

Southeast Strategy: When Jake Gaither won that Tampa game, I knew I could go somewhere as a football coach. Yet just wishing to be a good coach wasn't going to get me there, so I went to work at Southeast improving on what I had learned and applied at Lincoln. The first thing I had to do was change my Tiger Talk. All of the other schools had mascots, like tigers or bears or animals. But Knights were strong people, so I talked about the big strong Knights. "You don't see Knights rolling around on the floor," I told the players. "They don't do those silly things like tigers and bears and birds, animals that jump around and jump up and down. Knights are stately people. They don't need a mascot. Do you want to be stately, or a wild animal?" What could they say to that? I was always able to make it work for my particular school.

This kind of talk did backfire on me one time when we played against the Indians. It was a predominantly rich school, with white kids and some Jewish kids. Their coach knew I did these sorts of things, so he said at a pep rally, "Coach Myles said he never saw a blond Indian." When they got to the game they all said to me, "Hey Coach, come here. I'm blond and I'm an Indian." Of course, I never said that, but they had a lot of fun with that one and their coach used it to fire them up.

By the time I got to Southeast, I had a system—not a jumble of plays. We were going to be an off-tackle team, because if you could successfully run off-tackle, you dictated what you could do on offense. I figured that out watching

other teams. When we had played Southeast before, they were a single-wing team. They didn't want to run inside, because they had speed. But if all you have is speed, our guys can stay outside and keep you boxed in.

Van Horn, in contrast, was a power team. They had these big strong kids from the outskirts, and boy could they power. They had a bunch of 240-pound kids in the middle and a 225-pound fullback and they just pounded. Boom! Boom! Boom! You just had to close down on them. They could not beat you to the corner, and they were not good enough to go off-tackle, but boy could they pound you up the middle. But if all you have is power, I can pack it in and stop you.

If you have speed and power, though, you can run off-tackle and there are only two ways to stop that play. That is to close down from outside or loosen up on the inside. So you dictate to the defense what they have to do. That was how I sold it to my guys. If they close down, we can go outside. If they loosen up, we have enough strength to go up the middle. We were going to let them tell us what they want us to do by running off-tackle. We were going to be an off-tackle team, because that took all three of those elements: strength to go off-tackle, speed to go outside, and power to go up the middle.

By this time, we had become a two-platoon team. I wanted to play more guys just as I had done at Lincoln. I think we were ahead of the game. Most coaches only played about fourteen then, and playing more kids gave me a jump. I took little quick guys and found a way to use them at defensive back. We found guys who could move and made them linebackers. We got kids interested this way. Playing more guys would keep them out for football and give us better practices. Our practices were sometimes better than our games on Friday night. My last Southeast team had five shutouts. That team led the city in scoring. And only two guys went both ways. On Monday, we had offense day, and it was the best offense in the city (ours) running against the best defense in the city (ours). My first team defense was my scout squad, giving us the other team's defense. On Tuesday, it was defense day and my first team offense was the scout squad running against my defense. My kids were seeing a better opponent in practice than they were going to see on Friday night. Friday nights we didn't have any problems, because they had given us a better picture in practice.

Even my warm-ups were unique. I didn't believe in starting with calisthenics, because you would have guys cheating. They'd be doing push-ups on their knees. Instead, when we warmed up, I would have my starting safeties and starting defensive backs three across the field. I would have the whole team line up facing them, in maybe five lines. We threw passes to those five lines. We got to where we could run eleven guys down the field at a time, the whole rest of the team, and just those three guys out there could cover the field. My linemen loved it because they got to catch the ball and play hero!

If the quarterback faked and threw the ball near the middle, the safety was supposed to shake hands with another defensive back. If the QB threw it to the hash, the safety and corner were supposed to shake hands with each other. If he threw it from the hash to the outside, the corner was supposed to cover it. The kids had all kinds of confidence because they could cover ten guys at once. We had three or four guys in this lane, three or four in that one.

They would spread out and run the pattern, and everybody was getting loose. Nobody was loafing because they all were running down the field. In using this exercise, I warmed them up and taught them how we could cover people with the Cover-3. My safeties became confident that they could cover three or four guys. And they got the idea that they were not covering guys, they were covering from the hash mark to the sidelines, or between the two hash marks.

We would start every practice that way. There was one day, though, when we did do calisthenics. That was Friday nights, when we had to show the parents that the kids were doing push-ups, because that was what everyone expected. So on Thursday night, I would get them together and go over how to do some push-ups, do some jumping jacks to spell Tigers, or spell wherever I was coaching. Friday nights, the parents were there and they had to think I could be trusted. You know you go to a high school game and see people warming up, guys on one knee doing neck exercises, push-ups, etc. Well, that was what the parents expected. We did not do that Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday. Nope. We ran up and down the field like crazy men those days; but on Friday nights, we did calisthenics just like everyone else. We did not need to, but I could not have the parents thinking that their sons were being coached by an out-of-control crazy man.

Just like in Lincoln, when I arrived at Southeast I had good assistants. William Burgette and Charles Mathews were winning JV coaches who developed players for the program. Another new guy named Jim Julian was a varsity assistant in football. Jim was a math teacher who had been quite a basketball star in his day. He was also the track coach. I became Jim's track assistant so I could have my backfield out for track and running the mile relay. You could look at the junior varsity mile relay team and say those four guys are Bill's starting backfield next year. I thought the 440 really taught guys how to compete and to be tough. You had to have speed there and you had to be in top shape. It was great training, because to be a tailback or fullback on a Bill Myles team, you had to be able to carry the ball 18-25 times a game.

Everybody on my football team had to go out for track. That was Bill's rule. I did not have a bit of trouble enforcing that, either. It kept them out of trouble, I was able to see them, and I had them working out and in shape. Of course, we did not have any weight facilities. Weights? What were those? Early on, some coaches were afraid of people becoming muscle bound, but we could not have afforded weights if we had wanted them. We did push-ups for exercises and strength. Track kept them in shape and most importantly, out of trouble. My philosophy was a busy body does not get in trouble.

Of course, it is much different today. Back then the high school athlete went from one sport to the other. Most kids today are "one sport." You do not find athletes that play everything. We have made that impossible to do because the seasons overlap. Now, if you go to the state tournament or the regionals in football, you miss a few basketball games. The basketball coach does not want kids to play football. He does not want them to miss; he is afraid of them getting hurt. The students are going to these camps and they have made up their minds before they get to high school as to what they are going to do. It is a mistake. I think one sport develops them for the other. I once had an end named Robert Foster who was 6'8" and played great

basketball. He was a great football player, too. He could jump, he could run, he had a gun for an arm. We would throw him the quick slants, and boom he was gone. We would throw him the long ball and he would out jump everybody. I once saw him throw a ball over the top of the light poles in the football stadium and it landed 75 yards away! If Robert was in high school today, I doubt they would even let him play football.

Knights and Chiefs: By the time I got to Southeast, I also had become close to many of the Kansas City Chiefs professional players. The Chiefs practiced out at William Jewel College northeast of Kansas City. I would go to watch their practices and their black players were around in the black community. Housing was just beginning to open up for blacks then, and so those guys were living in our community. I coached football, I was around them, and so I became friends with many of the players. I do not remember seeing any other blacks at their practices when I went there, so I probably stood out. Being from Westport, I was never uncomfortable around other races. It never bothered me to go out there, and that was one more way I began to get my name out there. I got to make a commercial with Chiefs' Coach Hank Stram. They filmed Lorita and me with Hank and his wife, shopping at Milgram's Grocery Store. The commercial ran on TV and said, "Hank Stram, KC Chiefs Coach and Bill Myles, Southeast Coach."

Buck Buchannan hung out at The Sportsmen, Ralph Brown's barbershop where I went to get my haircut. This was and is one of the great places in KC to talk sports. Bobby Bell was over there. Mike Garrett was there. These legendary Chiefs all came to Ralph's because they couldn't get their hair cut in the white establishments. I also got to know other Chiefs, guys like Lenny Dawson, Otis Taylor, Fred Arbanas, and Ed Budde. Jim Tyrer came to my high school practices. These guys were big time players and became friends of mine. Of course, with me being a high school football coach and a local, the Kansas City players, especially the black ones, were glad to have me around. I still see Bobby Bell to this day.

I moved up in the world. Once I came to know these guys, I did not have to climb that railroad tie anymore to go over the fence at that same Blues Stadium, or Municipal Stadium as it was called then. I would just knock on the locker room door. They would open the door and I would be in. Sometimes Buck Buchannan or Bobby Bell would say, "I'm going to be there at 12:30." At 12:30, I would be there, hanging around the gate. There was someone at the door, but Buck or Bobby would say, "He's with me." Len Dawson let me in a few times, when I would miss those other guys. Lenny would say, "Come in with me." I never did pay to see any of those games.

I was going to their practices and their games, and I was learning. Buck and the guys were teaching me little secrets. I would ask questions, and they would tell me, "I know I got this guy when he does this." So I began to look for things, and taught my Southeast players to look for those things. Once again, I was in a place where I could see what the pros were doing, how they were doing it, and learn football from them. I was always looking to see what I could pick up, and using it to help my teams. And it was working!

Knights to Remember: There are many athletes from Southeast whom I have never forgotten. Ned Stevens was one of them. Ned was a tackle at Southeast, and at six-foot-five and around 265 pounds, he was everything you wanted in an athlete: Honor roll student. Great football player. High school All-American. A good basketball player. Threw the shot in track. His father had been a principal at a school. Ned was that kind of person.

Ned Stevens had given me a lot of trouble when I was at Lincoln coaching against Southeast, because Ned was big and he could move. At Lincoln, I put the formation to the wide side of the field against Ned. Ned played the tackle opposite that formation, so we would always have Ned to the short side of the field and we could run to the other side. When I got to Southeast, I did not want others doing that to us, so I moved Ned into the middle at nose guard. Remember now, athletes that played center back then weighed 155 or 165 pounds. Ned caused many fumbles over the center, and you could not run away from him when he played in the middle.

I remember one night we were playing North Kansas City. This was the same North Kansas City team I had played basketball against in high school as a senior; the school our fans had rattled with the "*You win the game, you lose the fight*" cheer when our black school played their white school. Well, Ned was huge and he was a great athlete, and he was white. So in the locker room, I told the team I wanted Ned to lead us out when we take the field. I told Ned to throw up his hands as high as he could, and go out hollering and screaming and acting all crazy. "Ned, I want you to go running out there with your hands in the air, hollering as loud as you can, like a crazy man," I said. Then I lined up all my big black guys behind him and told them to do the same. I told each of them I wanted them to holler and scream like they were crazy, too.

When we took the field over at their place, we went running out with big Ned leading the charge, and those five or six other big guys—mostly black—following him. Everyone was hollering and screaming, waving their arms in the air, jumping around like they were crazy. All the other team saw coming were these big, crazy guys, and of course the effect was to see this big white guy leading all those black guys, so he must really be tough! They all went out and as I was standing there outside the dressing room, I heard the North Kansas City fans say, "Wow, they're big and they're bad. And they got a white guy leading 'em, so he must be bad." Those people thought we were crazy!

Before North Kansas City knew what happened, we had them down 14-0! We jumped on them right quick and before they found out we were not as good as they thought we were, we had won the game. Now we had to hang on to win, just 14-10, but that was my strategy. Make 'em think we were crazy and get the lead. It worked! Instead of focusing on the game, they were thinking, look at all those big black guys, and they got that white guy leading them, he's so big and bad. Why, there're crazy! I knew they were going to think that, and that was my strategy to beat them.

Ned was a great kid. Tremendous student. President of his class. National Honor Society. The University of Missouri wanted Ned. Ohio State wanted Ned. Everybody wanted Ned. Former Ohio State player Jim Tyrer was playing for the Chiefs at that time, and Woody Hayes had heard about Ned Stevens,

so he sent Tyrer over to recruit him. Jim Tyrer had played on the Ohio State '58 team. He was one tackle, Jim Marshall was the other, and Jim Houston and Dick Schafrath were the ends. It was one of Woody Hayes' great offensive lines. Collectively, those four guys played fifty-seven years in the NFL! That was my very first contact with Ohio State, when Jim Tyrer would come by and we would go to lunch. Jim was coming to see me every day for Coach Hayes, because Ned was that good of a football player. I was really into it. I had these college guys coming Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, coming to see my guys. During that time, most days somebody from one of the major colleges was taking me out to lunch.

Ned's father had been a high school principal and before I got to Southeast, he had died at a basketball game while Ned was playing. In talking with Jim Tyrer, I learned he had the same tragic situation, in that his father had also died at a basketball game while Jim was playing. So Jim and Ned had a natural connection. Ned went to Columbus on a recruiting visit to Ohio State, and when he went, I told him "Ned, while you're there, see if you can get Woody's book *Hot Line to Victory* for me." Woody gave Ned one of those books to bring back to me, and that probably started my connection with Woody Hayes. I still have that book!

Ohio State did not get Ned Stevens, though. Ned accepted a scholarship at the University of Missouri, but he tore up his shoulder down there and never got to play much. It was a shame. He was a tremendous athlete.

Earl Everett was another player who shined for me. I called him "Earl the Pearl." Earl was my quarterback who threw eighteen touchdown passes as a junior, leading us to the City Championship my next to last year at Southeast. People were coming from all over to try and get Earl. Earl went on to the University of Nebraska, where he played quarterback and then wingback for the Huskers. Paul Smith was a wingback on that team with Earl, and by then we were running the Ohio State I formation. Paul won a scholarship to Kansas State and became a four-year defensive starter there. Royce Richberg was a five-foot-eleven, 240-pound guard/tackle who would go on to make first team All-State. Yes sir, Cecil Patterson had left a little bit in the cupboard for Coach Myles.

Turning Point: By the end of 1970, I had things rolling. My very first three years as an assistant, we had gone 7-20. My last four years at Lincoln, we had a record of 21-15. In my first two years at Southeast, we were 15-4-1, with a City Championship. I had a powerhouse coming back for the '71 season, and we would be expected to compete again for the City Championship. I was becoming known. Colleges wanted my kids. I should have been on top of the world. Instead, I was down and thinking of leaving coaching!

Back at Lincoln, if you had not done your class work and had not come prepared to work, I was going to paddle you. I had a paddle with my initials carved in it. I would put the chalk in those groves. The kids called it the branding iron. I know they do it differently now, but that was what we knew when I taught. If my football players messed up in class, or I got a slip back that they were doing unsatisfactory work, they were going to get a swat. Soon, other teachers started sending their kids down to me. "He's acting up in my

class," they would say. I started debating with myself, "Should I keep doing this? These kids are not giving me any problems, but I am having to paddle other teachers' problems."

That was when I had to do a lot of reading, a lot of praying, and a lot of thinking about *Place,* because I began to think I was just a whipping boy. They did not send me anyone but athletes, but still, I thought, "Maybe you're not doing your job if this kid is not learning world history. Are you making world history interesting? What are you telling them? What are you doing? Why are they acting up instead of interested in world history?"

I taught Missouri History. You had to pass the Missouri Constitution and the United States Constitution to get a high school diploma, but I did not just strictly teach the laws. I put some interesting things in there. I asked what were the mountains of Missouri, who were the great comedians of Missouri, who were the great athletes from Missouri, who were the great singers, who were the great poets from Missouri? We looked up stuff. Why did they call this the "Show Me State?" These were all things that did not have anything to do with the Constitution, but which made up Missouri History. Those things would be on my test. What made Missouri American? *The Louisiana Purchase.* What does Missouri mean? *People of Long Canoe.* How did the boot heel get to become part of Missouri? *Because a rich farmer wanted to be included in Missouri and all that land belonged to that farmer when Missouri became a state.* Those are all things my kids learned in my history class; but other teachers could not reach kids and they sent them to me.

Some of these players really took some talking to. Some were bigger than I was. We would talk, and they kept looking up on top of the locker, looking at my paddle. They would look at me. Then they would look up at that paddle, because they knew what was coming. I remember once, with this big kid, I said, "Real quick, that's going to cost you. Give me two." He jumped up and put his hands on the locker and I got him.

As he was going out, he turned and said, "When I came in here, there was no way you were going to whip me. We were going to fight if you tried to whip me." But I got him. I saw that weakness come, and I pounced. That was it.

When I went to Southeast, the tradition around "the Knights" was such a big thing; but even there, I had to discipline other teachers' students. Although we were enjoying success, winning games, and the students were dressing nicely and all of that, I just figured it was too big a battle, too big a fight. There were 1,800 students at that school and I felt I was the only one fighting the fight. One day I went into one of the Southeast restrooms across from the main office and saw a student urinating in the face bowl. I just hauled off and kicked him in the rear end. His friends were there watching, so he jumped all bad with me. "I ain't one of your boys," he hollered, "you can't do nothing with me." Whine, whine, whine.

I got in his face. "Look, son, you don't have to be one of my boys, but you're urinating in that face bowl. Suppose one day you have to wash your face in that sink. You are just doing that to show off in front of these other students. I'm Coach Myles and you know that. I saw you do it. You know that

everybody around this school will know that Coach Myles saw you do it; and I have a responsibility to say something. I saw you and I don't stand for that."

Wouldn't you know that the student came down later in the day to apologize to me. "I see where you're coming from," he said. He shook my hand, and we, in a way, became buddies even though he did not play sports. I do not know if there was anyone else, other than Jim Julian, one of my assistants, who would have done anything. Would they have taken a chance on fighting one of the students? Probably not; but I did.

As I said before, even when I was in elementary school, I knew I wanted to coach. It was just fun to be in the gym. I remember thinking I was going to play, and when I got through playing, I was going to coach. At the Y, at the boxing club, I saw men coaching. They were getting paid for doing something that was fun. Of course, you had to teach to be a coach, so there was never a doubt that teaching was what I would do. I loved teaching physical education. I should have been on cloud nine.

It was the '60s and turbulent times. It all was coming together in a time of change and questioning of authority. I was the person who was doing all the punishing; so I thought about getting out of coaching, even getting out of education as Jim Buford had, because I did not like it. I got to a point where I needed help. I was really searching. Was this for me? One day, during that soul searching, my mother gave me that meditation called *Place*, with which we started this story. The author is unknown, but it begins:

> *The place you seek is seeking you, the place you need needs you. Divine Principle brings need and supply together for mutual good. He wisely, intelligently and lovingly controls, guides, protects, prospers and blesses this union of His idea (man) and this normal, joyous activity (work). The large upper room is even now furnished and prepared and waiting for you. It does not take time for you to build your place, or your work, for it is impossible for there to be an idea that fills it. The place must meet the needs of the idea if it is prepared, enlarged, uplifted, joyous, expectant of infinite good, so that no limitation may hinder the full manifestation of God's will for His idea: and you know that God's will for his idea is perfection, and nothing else. All we need change is our sense of discord to the consciousness of harmony and divine government . . .*

"All we need change is our sense of discord to the consciousness of harmony and divine government . . ." That meditation has since driven my life. I have given a copy of *Place* to many athletes, as well as others. I have given it to some of the guys I have coached, and other guys who were having problems. I have given it to people who have come off the street into my office. People who seemed to be down on life would walk in and we would talk, and then I would get out this writing about *Place* that Mother gave me. I believe in *Place*. It was *Place* that had me born fifteen and a half years after my parents were married, to be alive at that point in history, to be there for the opening of opportunities for black people. It was certainly *Place* that had me go to segregated schools and then end up at an integrated college. It was *Place* that had me return to Drake University to finish up. It was *Place* that put me in my first coaching job at a

school that had not won a game in eighteen years. And it was *Place* that had introduced me to Cecil Patterson and Eddie Robinson.

Yet going into 1971, with all I had going, with the wins, with a City Championship and two second places, I still wasn't sure of my place in life. I, Bill Myles, needed help, and I found it in two new sources. One was likely, the other not.

The first source of help came on March 8, 1971, that turning point in my life that I would later reflect on in that private plane taking off from Columbus, Ohio. When I needed help, *Place* again led me to it. I remember that date, because it was Lorita's birthday, and also the night at Madison Square Garden when Joe Frazier dealt Muhammad Ali his first professional loss. But the thing I remember most about that day was that morning I had decided I was going to read a chapter of the Bible every day. I thought maybe that would get me squared away. I started reading the Bible every morning, and I have continued it ever since. Now, I read the whole Bible in a year.

But *Place* not only led me to help through God's word in 1971. In March of '72, almost one year to the day after I started reading the Bible, *Place* also led help to me. This time that help came in a most surprising way when it just walked into my office, sat down across from me, and simply said, "I want to talk to you."

The turning point in my life would soon be at hand!

Chapter 16

I WANT TO TALK TO YOU

Southeast was a powerhouse that 1971 season. We scored 277 points and gave up only 35. We had five shutouts. In four of the games we put more than 40 points on the board. We finished 8-1 and only a 1-point loss to Southwest kept us from winning the City Championship. Our All-District, All-City quarterback, Earl Everett, would play for Nebraska in two years. It was one of my finest teams.

Colleges started knocking. Some wanted my players; others wanted me. Kansas State offered me a position, but I would have taken a pay cut to go there. I had offers from Lincoln University, Central Missouri State, and Pittsburg State in Kansas. Nebraska's Tom Osborne came in to see some of my guys. As I said, Woody called and wanted Ned Stevens. That is the kind of program we had developed. This little kid from Penn School was now sending kids to visit Nebraska and Ohio State.

That following spring, in March of 1972, Tom Osborne walked into my office one Thursday afternoon and said he wanted to talk with me. That was nothing new. Schools wanted my guys so it wasn't anything for the Big Eight coaches to come in and talk. We had the best offense in the league. We had the best defense in the league. We were rolling and our kids could play. So it wasn't a surprise that he wanted to talk. When Tom said he wanted to visit with me, I said, "Good, let me get my roster," like I always did when a coach came recruiting. That '71 team had many talented players, so I got the roster to see which players he wanted to check out. I was already running names through my head, guys he might be interested in.

Tom began making small talk with me so I asked whom he wanted to talk about.

"No, I want to visit with you," he said.

I was thinking to myself, "Now, what does he think we're doing?" I was telling him who's playing, who is good enough to go there, who can play there, who is not good enough to go there. I was confused. "What does this guy think we are doing?" I wondered. He soon cleared that up. "What I want to do is offer you an opportunity to coach at the University of Nebraska," Tom said.

I said to myself, "I've got to count to three!" One-thousand-one, one-thousand—"Very definitely I would be interested," I blurted out to him! I hadn't even gotten to one-thousand-two, and I blurted that out.

Tom asked if I could come to Lincoln that very weekend for a visit and an interview. But I told Tom I couldn't come up then. It was Lorita's birthday, and I had promised to take her to this nice restaurant. At that time, the

schools could feed the recruits and their coaches. It was recruiting season, so I had been going to all these great restaurants when the recruiters came to town. They were feeding me steaks, and this one place we had gone had a gaucho steak that was something else. It was out of this world and since I had been the one going out, I had promised to take Lorita there for her birthday. So I told Tom I couldn't make it that upcoming weekend.

Do you believe it? Tom Osborne was offering me a chance to interview at the University of Nebraska and I told Coach I couldn't go that weekend. There Tom Osborne was, offering me a possible coaching position at the number one team in the country, and because I had promised to take my wife out for dinner, I had the nerve to say I couldn't interview! I look back on that and wonder, "What was I thinking?" Looking back, I just can't believe I did that! Fortunately, Tom graciously set things up for Monday instead.

When Tom left, the first thing I did was call Lorita. Then I called my old basketball coach, Perry Kirkpatrick, who was the assistant superintendent of schools. "Coach, how much notice do I have to give the school system before I leave?" I asked him.

He asked what I was thinking about and I answered, "Coach, it is just me to you. You can't say a word to anybody. I'm going up to Lincoln, Nebraska, to interview for an assistant coaching position on the University of Nebraska football team." Coach said I needed to give them two weeks.

"Okay," I replied. "Don't say anything to anybody."

On Saturday night, Lorita and I went to that special restaurant in Kansas City. As we were enjoying the steak gaucho, I looked over and there sat University of Missouri head football coach Al Onofrio. Al had his assistants with him, and some of the alums that had helped Missouri with recruiting in Kansas City, because recruiting season had just ended.

Al had seen me many times so he came over to say hello. I explained it was Lorita's birthday and he wished us many happy returns. Then he left. Later Al sent one of his assistants over, and he said, "Bill, Al said this dinner is on the University of Missouri! It's on us! You don't have to worry about it." I thanked him, and when he left, I put my head down and snickered. It was all I could do to keep from busting out.

Lorita asked, "What are you laughing about?"

"If Al Onofrio knew that you and I were going to get on a plane and go to Nebraska to interview for an assistant coaching job," I whispered to her, "there is no way he would be buying us this fancy dinner!" Al Onofrio had just bought his soon-to-be competitor one of the biggest steaks in Kansas City!

Lorita was quick. "Well, since he bought this one," she said, "you're still going to have to buy me another dinner."

They're Gonna Get You: Before we left to go to Lincoln, I went to Ralph Brown's barbershop and got a haircut to look my best for the interview. One of the barbers, Willie Thompson, had played baseball with me. We called Willie "Weasel," and he worked in Ralph's shop, The Sportsmen. Willie was cutting my hair that day and the Weasel liked to talk! Snip, snip, snip, talk, talk, talk! You probably have a picture of the classic black barbershop. This was it. All the guys were sitting around in there.

"You gotta get out of this league," Weasel said to me. "They're not going to stand for you beating all these people the way you're beating them around here. They're going to get you. They're going to get someone to offer you a job. Northwest Missouri State, Southeast Missouri State, Lincoln U, they gonna get someone to offer you a job! Down at Kirksville, maybe over at Pittsburg State in Kansas. You cannot just come in here and keep beating these people in Kansas City like you beat them. They're not gonna stand for it."

Of course, I was sitting there getting my haircut special because I was leaving for Nebraska the next day, and this joker was talking about Central Missouri State. I was going to Nebraska, which was number one in the nation; and there Weasel was, talking the stuff about a job at all these smaller Division II schools and at the black schools. I just smiled and listened to him go off.

We flew to Lincoln at the beginning of the next week. Tom asked me many things during the interview, but he had already made up his mind about me from the things he had heard from other people, other high school and college coaches in the area. Tom Osborne showed us around, but Bob Devaney was still the head coach. Bob was going to coach for one more year and then Tom was taking over. I would be working under both of them that first year. When Devaney offered me the job, I accepted.

Beating 'Round the Bush: After I accepted, I came back to Kansas City and called a meeting with my players, asking them to meet me in the gym after school. They thought I was teed off about the way they had been working out, and the word spread that I was going to chew them out. I was sitting in my office that day, wondering what I was going to do, how I was going to break the news. I had not yet told a soul at school. I had a second problem, too. About two hours before I was going to have the meeting with the team, Rev. Hudson, the father of two of my players, came by to see me because we were planning to have a carnival. I had found out from the Catholic schools, Rockhurst and DeLaSalle, that when they had a carnival, they were raising around $25,000. I was figuring we would not make what the Catholic schools did, but my goal was to make $15,000 for our program. That was big money to us in those days. I had it all planned. Rev. Hudson was my contact with the parents. We were going to sell tickets through all the elementary and junior high schools that fed into Southeast. We were going to have our $5,000 even before the carnival arrived. That way if it rained, we still covered the cost for them to come.

As Rev. Hudson was talking to me about the carnival, I turned to him, and out of the blue blurted out, "Reverend, I have something to tell you. You cannot tell a single person, but you must run this carnival. I am getting ready to go up to tell the principal that I have another job; and then I am having a meeting with the team after school. My players do not even know it yet. Don't you say anything to anybody. I am not going to coach at Southeast next year. I am getting ready to coach on the college level. The University of Nebraska has offered me a job. You're going to have to carry the load on this carnival." The Reverend was shocked. We were rolling. The freshman team had not lost a game. The junior varsity only lost one. The varsity had

only lost one game. We were on a roll. Southeast High was going to rule Kansas City for a long, long time. Boom! Boom! Boom! He was shocked, shocked that I was leaving.

A couple of hours later, we had the team meeting and I went to face my players in the gym. It was one of the hardest things I ever had to do. I locked the door because I wanted to talk just to the players; I did not want anyone else coming in there. It was just me and my team. Now, the players thought I was about to chew them out for their out-of-season conditioning, or lack of it. Everyone came wondering if I were going to give them a chewing. All winter I had been giving them my talks about heart and togetherness and teamwork. I was telling the players how we do not let each other down, and how we help each other. However, at the same moment that I was discussing these principles, I was also thinking about how to give them a different message—a message about desertion. I was leaving them. How was I to tell them? It was tough.

I was having a hard time because I had preached all that commitment stuff to them, and there I was just dancing around the bush. I was always talking about loyalty, dedication, team, all the stuff that I taught them, yet I was about to admit I was bailing. It was a trying moment for me. Finally, I just blurted it out, "Fellas, what this meeting is actually about is that I'm not going to be your coach next year. All this talk about loyalty, guys, what I'm really trying to tell you is, I'm not going to be your coach next year because I've got an opportunity to coach at the University of Nebraska."

There was a long, awkward silence. It was like that moment of quiet, right when the conductor raises his baton to start the national anthem. Except I was about to cry rather than sing.

Now this was 1972 and Nebraska had just won back-to-back national championships. Finally, Michael Tucker broke the silence. I can remember his name and hear his voice to this day, God bless him. Big Michael Tucker, my fullback, stood up and slowly asked, "*Thee* University of Nebraska?"

"*Thee* University of Nebraska," I answered him. There was still utter silence.

"*Thee* National Champions University of Nebraska?" he asked.

"*Thee* National Champions University of Nebraska," I answered again. There was another long pause.

"Well, hell, I wouldn't have even come back!" Michael said. That broke us up. I was having a hard time telling these guys I was leaving, and then Michael goes and says, "Hell, I wouldn't have come back." That broke the tension and we all laughed. Suddenly everything was good, bless his soul. The guys were all around me hugging me and slapping me on the back! It was emotional. Finally, I told the guys I had to go up and tell the principal because nobody else knew at the school. Nobody knew other than Lorita, Reverend Hudson, and Perry Kirkpatrick. So I went up and told the principal that I would be leaving in two weeks. That was the way I left Southeast High to move on to *Thee* University of Nebraska.

That was how I left Southeast. But you are probably wondering why? Why did they tap me on the shoulder? With all the potential coaches available, why did Nebraska pick the boy from Penn School, the kid from Forty-Third

and Broadway, the guy from Kansas City who had zero college coaching experience? Well, I have wondered, too. So we asked Tom Osborne to explain:

> Bill Myles was of interest to me as a potential coach for the University of Nebraska because I recruited in Kansas City during the 1960s and early 1970s. I had met Bill, and I was impressed by his interest in his players and by his professionalism. Bill cared about his players. Some coaches are more concerned about their careers and their players are used as pawns in a chess game, to advance their own cause. Bill instead put the players at the center; he wanted to see them do well as people. Bill was well grounded with good values. He was not a win at all cost person, not somebody that was going to cut corners, and would not be a poor role model.
>
> Bill and I shared something personal, in that we both were people of faith and neither of us had to resort to swearing to be an effective coach. Long term, long haul, someone who bases their coaching on principles and values will do better and last longer than someone who is focused on the bottom line. Bill is a good family man, and that was something that I think young people need to see. Many of them have not necessarily experienced a strong male role model in their lives, have not experienced seeing one that takes care of their family and is dedicated to their wife and children.
>
> Bill of course was certainly a student of the game. He liked football. I don't think you have to know a lot about the history of football, but Bill knew a lot about people like Bear Bryant and Woody Hayes. He had spent a lot of time reading and studying the careers of some of the more memorable coaches in the game. He seemed to draw a lot from that.
>
> I hired Bill for all those reasons. He was well organized, and I felt he was the kind of guy that would represent our program well and be a solid coach. I thought that Bill would be a good role model and would relate well to the Husker players, so I offered him a job.

Before leaving Kansas City for good, I went down to the barbershop one last time. Weasel was still there, cutting my hair again, and all the guys were lined up. It was the same as before I went for the interview. Snip, snip, snip, talk, talk, talk. Then Weasel turned to the guys and said with the straightest of faces, "I told you boys this big shot was too good for us. I told you boys that. Didn't I tell you that? When he was right here in this chair the last time, didn't I tell you he had the big head, tell you he was too good for this neighborhood? Didn't I tell you guys that before we knew it, he'd be leaving us common folk behind for some uptown job? Didn't I tell you so?"

All the guys were laughing at him, "Weasel, you're lying. You're telling a lie, Weasel."

"No, that's the truth," Weasel said. "Honest to God. Isn't that the truth, Bill? Tell them, Bill. I knew they were gonna get you out of this league. I told these guys that. Tell them it's so, Bill."

"Yeah, Weasel," I laughed, "you told me that. Of course, you were talking

Southwest Missouri State, Northeast Missouri State, Central Missouri State, Lincoln U! I was sitting here already heading to Nebraska, and the whole time you were talking these second tier schools! Yeah, you told 'em, Weasel."

The guys all laughed and wished me well. I would need it. Kansas City had been my home for nearly thirty-six years. I had left it once, and I was about to leave it again. This time, too, it would be for a whole different world, another new one unlike anything I had ever lived in.

Halftime

Memorial Stadium
Lincoln, Nebraska

1972

MEMORIAL STADIUM
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

Chapter 17

THE KNIGHT TURNED RED

The last week of March in 1972, I left high school coaching and went straight to Nebraska. No longer a Knight, I was now a Husker, part of a team that had just come off winning two straight national championships. People have asked me what that was like, because most guys would have had two or three stops in between. Wow! It was an experience! I had never coached guys like they coached at this new level. As I have said, I was one of the few high school coaches that went to all the clinics around. I had also taken a night course in which different coaches from around the country came in to tell about their experiences. I knew a lot of the terminology, but still it was an extraordinary jump.

Yet football is football, and it was just incredible to have all these players that really wanted to play. This was what I loved to do and suddenly I was able to do it 24/7. I didn't have to teach classes. If I wanted to go somewhere to scout a player, money was no object. I could just get on the plane and go. It was like going from the outhouse to the penthouse! I went from washing the uniforms of my players, to seeing guys getting clean shorts and clean uniforms twice a day. I went from me taking care of everything to someone else taking care of almost everything. It was quite a revelation. I had to trick the Lincoln High principal into buying us a seven-man sled. At Nebraska, if you wanted something, you said it and it was there. What a difference!

Nebraska wasn't completely foreign. Naturally, I knew Tom Osborne because he had been recruiting Southeast and had come into Kansas City. And I had heard him at clinics. I knew about Bob Devaney, and anybody that lived in the Big Eight area knew what Bob was accomplishing. By this time, he had achieved saint-like status in Lincoln. Still, though I had seen Bob Devaney at clinics, the interview was the first time I met him personally. Tom helped me find a place to live. He looked out for us. Since I was going to replace Carl Selmer as line coach, Tom had us work with Cletus Fischer, the other line coach. Tom impressed me because he coached like I wanted to coach. Here was a guy who was tough but didn't have to prove it. I always liked people who didn't use profanity, and Tom didn't. I had never used it, and Tom was like that. When he said, "Judas Priest" or "Goll Dang," I saw 270-pound tackles all cowering in the corner. Tom was smart. Tom was tough. Tom was everything you ever wanted in a guy you coached for.

Nebraska football represented just what I had wanted to do all my life. I thought I was in heaven because everything was devoted to football. We were looking at film. We were on the chalkboard. We were calling recruits. We were

going to speak to alumni. It was all football, and I was just plain in heaven. Husker Heaven.

When I got to Nebraska, Tom introduced me to all the assistants—coaches who had been there ever since Devaney took over. Of course, I didn't know what to do at first, but after a couple of days I was right at home. I said to myself on many occasions, "If the boys on Forty-Third and Broadway could see me now!" I had special pants to coach in. I had new shirts just about every week. I didn't have to buy socks because they gave me new socks. I didn't have to buy anything. It was there. I told Lorita, "All I have to do is furnish a warm body and coach football!" It was heaven on earth. Of course, I would be lying if I said there wasn't any pressure. Yet when you are with a group of like-minded men, you are in your own little world and you thrive on that. Those ten, twelve, fifteen guys, those coaches and graduate assistants, are together twelve or fourteen hours a day. You are oblivious to anything else. You are just working to work. You are a competitor. You don't care what other people say. You are competing. You want to beat everybody. I had won a lot as a player, we had some good years at Drake, and I had gotten used to winning as a high school coach, so that was what it was all about. Competing.

No Place Like Nebraska: The people in Nebraska were great. Nebraskans don't think there is anything like Nebraska. That is in their fight song, in the verse, "There's no place like Nebraska." After each game, we coaches would all go to the Legionnaire Club to eat. The place would be full, and everyone would be singing the Nebraska song. The fans would just flock to our table. They would bring us food like you wouldn't believe, including these huge steaks—twenty-four ounces and all that. It was a great, great experience.

The thing about Nebraska football that first impressed me was the practices. They were so organized compared to what I had seen in high school. Everything was on time. I was trying to do that as a high school coach, but I was amazed when I got to Nebraska and saw how it was really done. At first, I thought the staff was trying to keep me out of everything. One guy would say something, then another guy would say yeah, and a third would say something about such and such. They had five or six sentences to it, shorthand if you will. If they had said the same thing in longhand, it would have taken five or six paragraphs. But those guys had worked together for so long—in some cases, nine or ten years—they had such a chemistry that they knew what the other was thinking. It took me a while to learn the lingo, to learn that was just their system, and they really were not keeping things from me. But it was hard at first.

Most of the staffers were twelve- or fifteen-year guys, so it was a great place to learn football. Jimmy Walden had been there the least amount of time, and he got a raise because I came. Jimmy thanked me for that. Jimmy later became head coach at Iowa State. Jim Ross was a great teacher. Cletus Fisher was there. Warren Powers later became the head coach at Missouri. Monte Kiffin, whom they called the "guru" was defensive coordinator when I coached the linebackers my last two years there. Monte has since been head coach at NC State, coached at Tennessee, coached at Southern Cal, and coached twenty-eight years in the pros with seven different NFL teams. He won a Super Bowl as

defensive coordinator for Tampa Bay, and is now the coordinator for the Cowboys! I just had so many good people around me who were teaching me football all the time. Nebraska in the '70s was a lot like Ohio State and Woody, a magnet for good people and a cradle for coaches. What better people to learn under? What better place to develop my career? It wasn't just coaches, either. When I got there, they had three All-Americans on one team. They had Willie Harper, Rich Glover, and Johnny Rodgers—who also won the Heisman, of course.

I arrived in March and back then recruiting went longer into the spring. My first recruiting trip was to Toledo. I was replacing Bill Thornton, who had been a high school player in Toledo and who had played for Devaney at Nebraska. Bill was leaving to coach for the St. Louis Cardinals so I assumed his coaching and recruiting duties. The first thing they did was to put me on a plane and send me to Toledo Libbey. Toledo Libbey was an easy one for me, because it was on the street that went straight into Toledo from the airport! Then I asked the guy at Libbey, "How do I get to Toledo Scott?" At Scott, I would ask them how to get to the next one, and that's how I found my way around Ohio that first trip. There were no GPS units then, so that was my initiation to college recruiting and to navigating the state of Ohio.

That first year I coached the offensive line with Cletus Fisher and Carl Selmer. They got me ready. Carl left my second year, and I was offensive line coach two more years. After that third year, a linebacker spot opened up. I approached Tom about that position. At first, he didn't want me to go over to defense, but I told him, "Tom, I want to learn both sides of the ball, because one day I hope to be a head coach." So Tom let me change and my last two years at Nebraska, I coached the linebackers and learned defense.

Thunder Thornton: I was not the first black assistant coach in Nebraska football, but the second. Bill Thornton was first. Bill had been a great running back at Nebraska, and a three-year letterman from 1960–62, who went on to become a running back for the St. Louis Cardinals professional team. Nicknamed "Thunder," Bill was a bulldozing fullback from Toledo Scott. Bill was known for outplaying Ernie Davis, the great Heisman Trophy Winner of 1961, during a head-to-head match up in Lincoln. He had also played terrific when Nebraska beat Michigan, 25-13, in 1962 up at the Big House. Bill played that game with a separated shoulder but still scored the touchdown that put the game out of reach. That victory in Ann Arbor put Nebraska on the map during Bob Devaney's first year and started the heyday of Nebraska football.

Woody Hayes had recruited Thornton, but Bill elected to go to Nebraska at a time when there were few other blacks on the Nebraska campus. When he opted for Nebraska, he opened the recruiting pipeline to Ohio that Nebraska so successfully exploited in the '70s. I have since thought how hard it must have been on Woody Hayes to lose Bill Thornton, especially since Coach Hayes had been so successful recruiting black players in the '50s when other schools were not doing that.

In replacing Thornton, I was following not only a good player, but a trailblazer. He had not only been Nebraska's first black captain, but also the first black member of Nebraska's prestigious scholarship and leadership honorary.

Bill Thornton was revered by the Nebraska nation, and Dennis Claridge, Thornton's All-American teammate, had this to say about him in the *Husker History Book*:

> His athletic accomplishments were historic, but the measure of Thunder Thornton the man was the way he lived, laughed and loved. Everyone liked Thunder Thornton. He had . . . a huge impact on this university and this program. There were a lot of reasons why Coach Devaney wanted Thunder to be one of his first two captains in his first year here, but the biggest was that his teammates absolutely respected him.

So in March of 1972, I stepped into some big Nebraska shoes! I wasn't just following a coach; I was stepping into the footprints of a legend. Tom Osborne didn't want Thunder to leave Nebraska and had tried to talk him out of it. I wonder, "What would my life have been like if Bill Thornton had listened to him?" But *Place* was at work again for me. Tom wasn't successful, Bill left, and his position opened. *The place I sought was seeking me.*

Kansas State had previously offered me an assistant's job when Vince Gibson left Tennessee to become head coach at Kansas State, but I couldn't afford to go. I have thought about this a lot. If I had gone to Kansas State, I would have probably coached at ten or twelve schools by now, because Kansas State didn't do anything until Bill Snyder arrived. It wasn't a place where you could consistently win. Kansas high school football was not strong, and if you were good in Kansas, you were probably going to the University of Kansas. So Nebraska was the place to be.

This was about the time when the colleges began to actively offer opportunities to black coaches. I think they thought at first, "This will help us recruit." They thought, "He can recruit the black athletes." That is the way it was early on at many schools. The pros, too. After Bill Thornton went to the Cardinals, he later resigned. A Nebraska paper reported he was unhappy because he was expected to be more of a liaison with the black players than a coach. But I told Nebraska when they hired me, and I told the press, too, when I got to Lincoln, "I'm not here just to coach the black athletes. I coach the white ones, too." When I arrived, I was interviewed by the papers about that, and they printed my quote with the headline, *University of Nebraska's Bill Myles Was Hired to Coach, Not as Go-Between.* And coach I did. I encountered no problems when I got to Nebraska, and my family and I were well received. I coached black players. I coached white players. It did not matter. Everyone was the same to me. Either they were a football player, or they were not. That was all that mattered. It was all that mattered to Tom Osborne, too. In an interview he said:

> It is true that there was not a huge number of African American coaches in Division I football at the time that I hired Bill; however, there were some. I didn't think of Bill being a trailblazer or having to encounter any special obstacles or that he had to be a cut above other coaches to be selected. I just looked at Bill as a coach and thought

that he would be excellent. The University of Nebraska had its first African American player in the 1890s, and even though there were not large numbers of African American players over the next seventy-plus years, there were almost always a few on our teams. The main reason that there were not large numbers of African Americans was that the makeup of Nebraska was heavily Caucasian and there simply were not large numbers of African Americans in the State of Nebraska. Having said that, I always thought that Bill was very well accepted and did a great job for our program.

That does not mean I was unaware of the importance my success would be for my race and for other coaches who wanted to follow. On October 24, 1972, we were halfway through my first season at Nebraska. As we prepared to face Oklahoma State that coming Saturday, I learned that Jackie Robinson, my childhood hero, had died. Jackie was always my idol, and when he died that day, I hoped he had died knowing that I had made it to Nebraska as a coach the spring before. I don't think he associated my name, but I do think he was aware. I do think Jackie knew there was a black coaching at Nebraska. I think he thought, "That's another step. Maybe we'll get a head coach someday." I was just one of those little kids running around behind him when he was playing with the Monarchs, so he wouldn't know me from beans. When I made it, he was still big in my mind, and I was hoping he would read the article in *Jet Magazine, which* reported that Nebraska had hired a black coach and that it was Bill Myles. That was one of the first things that went through my mind when I read about Jackie's passing. *I hope Jackie saw this news article.* Not for me, of course, but for him, for all that he carried on his shoulders to blaze our trail. I do not know for sure, but I suspect he did. After all, Jackie was somebody, and any black person who was somebody read *Jet.*

Bob Devaney: When I first went up for the interview, naturally I had to talk with Bob Devaney. His name is pronounced DE-VAN-E, and the way people there remembered it was to say, "Get off your fanny and help Bob Devaney!" Bob was a great coach. He could tell jokes like you couldn't believe. Bob was an Irishman who had a temper, but his temper was right now and then forgotten. You would see him with his arm around a guy, the same one he had been fussing with minutes earlier. He was a great organizer. Bob came from that famous Michigan State coaching tree: Charlie Bachman, Clarence "Biggie" Munn, and then Duffy Daugherty. Having been one of Duffy Daugherty's many disciples, Bob understood football. He had been a successful high school coach in Michigan before going to Michigan State under Biggie Munn and then under Duffy. At Michigan State, Bob worked along with Dan Devine, who became head coach at Missouri, and Chuck Fairbanks, who later became a head coach at Oklahoma. They all came from that Michigan State tree with those outstanding pedigrees.

Devaney had been very successful at the University of Wyoming. In the five seasons there, Bob had gone 35-10-5 and won four straight Skyline Conference Championships and a Sun Bowl game. I am into population statistics because of my experience at Nebraska. Tom Osborne had it figured out—that

there is one major college football player per every 100,000 people. Well, today the whole state of Wyoming only has 560,000 people, and in the 1970s it was less than that. But a lot of players could get into Wyoming when they couldn't get into other schools. Devaney used to tell me that he stationed a coach at the bus stop to keep kids from leaving! Wyoming had good football players while Devaney was there, and it was definitely a jumping off place for coaches. Bob Devaney, Pat Dye, Dennis Erickson, and Joe Tiller all traveled through Wyoming.

When Nebraska hired Bob, they had experienced only two winning seasons in the previous twenty years! Things just took off under Bob, and Cornhusker football would never be the same. He won two national championships in '70 and '71, and retired with an overall coaching record of 136-30-7, winning over eighty percent of his games. Bob broke the string Oklahoma had, the run where they won thirteen straight championships in the Big Six/Seven/Eight Conference. In Bob's first two years, they went 19-3, and it's been said that Bob Devaney was "the guy who turned the Huskers into the Big Red." The irony of all that is Bob was the third choice for the job after two others had turned it down. When Bob arrived in Lincoln that first year, his salary was reportedly $19,000. Can you imagine in today's market hiring someone who did what Bob Devaney did for $19,000?

Bob Devaney was an altogether different guy than Tom Osborne. Bob was a comedian and could tell jokes like you couldn't believe. Someone would ask him a question about football and he would start with, "That reminds me . . ." Then he would go off into his jokes. He could talk like a hair lip and would go into an act he had with that. One day we were in Omaha and I was sitting in the back of the room when he did his hair lip routine. One gentleman near me said, "I don't think that's funny. I have a brother who has a hair lip." I told Bob about that, and he never did that routine again. I must admit, I had laughed at him earlier; but after that experience, it gave me a different perspective and I realized how unkind it was. Bob did, too.

One very valuable thing I learned from Bob Devaney was, "Don't carry it with you forever." It's over. It's done with. There is nothing you can do about it. If you make a mistake, you can't get it back. Go on; don't let it cause you to make another mistake. I used that approach some during my high school coaching, but it was really ingrained under Bob Devaney. There, and then later at Ohio State, I would tell my players, "The play is gone. You missed your assignment. You didn't do this. There is nothing you can do about it. It belongs to God. It's gone forever, so don't let it make you mess up on the next play." I was able to get this through to most of my players, but not everyone. I had one guy I never could break of that. If he messed up on one play, you could always count on him messing up the next two. Let it go. I got that from Bob Devaney.

I also learned from Bob how to please people, how to relate, to connect, to talk to them. And maybe most importantly, I learned organizational skills. I was fortunate to work one year with Bob Devaney. And when Bob stepped down to athletic director after that first season, even though he was no longer coaching, he was still around for me to learn from. Bob's legacy to me was two things: organizational skills and letting people do their job. You'll hear

later how important those skills became in the twilight of my career, and how Bob would go to bat for me then.

Tom Osborne: Bob Devaney is a legend, but Tom Osborne helped make him that. In '67 and '68 the Huskers had struggled—as in only 6-4 seasons; but the turnaround Bob had earlier engineered set the bar high. When the natives became restless, Bob was smart enough to bring in an innovative offensive thinker by the name of Tom Osborne. Together they revamped the offense, put in the I formation, and went to an unbalanced line. Two seasons later, Nebraska was the national champion! Tom Osborne is the smartest, hardest working coach I ever worked with. When I say the smartest, Tom Osborne has a PhD and that doesn't stand for piled higher and deeper. Think of a giant in your own career—Jonas Salk if you are a doctor, da Vinci if you are a painter, Henry Ford if you are an engineer, maybe Grantland Rice if you are a sportswriter—and think what it would be like studying under that master of the craft. That was the way it was for me when I came under the tutelage of Dr. Tom Osborne.

Tom could look at a film a couple or three times and see what it would take other people eight, ten, or twelve times to see. Tom Osborne could look at a film two or three times and see what Woody had to look at several times to see. Of course, if Woody had to look at it twenty times to get it, he would do that. Woody's thing was, I'll roll up my sleeves and outwork anybody. Tom, though, could outsmart all the others. Tom was a no-nonsense guy. A Husker through and through, he probably puts on red underwear every day. Six-foot-four. 205 pounds. A great athlete. That was Tom Osborne. Born in Hastings, Nebraska, in 1937, Tom was the Nebraska High School Athlete of the Year and then Nebraska College Athlete of the Year at Hastings College, where he played football, basketball, and ran track.

I was only four months older than Tom Osborne, but Tom already had his PhD when I arrived in Lincoln. Tom was a goal-oriented guy who just went about quietly doing his business. Tom had always said, "If I'm not a head coach by the time I'm thirty-five, I'm going to go into something else." Tom had set that goal, and at age thirty-five he achieved it when he took over the Nebraska Cornhuskers national championship program the year after I arrived. Tom was one year away from being a head coach when Billy Myles showed up as a rookie coming from high school, if that tells you anything.

Tom had played pro football for three years, two with the Redskins and one with the San Francisco 49ers. I remember Tom telling me the coldest place he had ever played was Cleveland Stadium in December. Now this was coming from someone raised on the plains of Nebraska. I found out later when I recruited in Cleveland that Tom was right. You can just see that wind come off that lake.

Of all the coaches I have worked with, the guy that comes closest to having a personality like Tom Osborne is Jim Tressel. They are both religious, goal-oriented, and supremely organized people. Like Coach Tressel, Tom never threw his religion at you. You just saw it by the way he lived. Even before Nebraska came calling, I had met Tom at the Fellowship of Christian Athletes camps.

Since Tom was a very religious person, on Sundays we would go in and run the team in the morning and then he would give us time to go to church. After that the coaches would come back and stay until nine or ten o'clock Sunday night. A local restaurant would bring us food around seven o'clock. We ate and stayed until ten o'clock, and then we would do that again on Monday night. The owner was a big booster so we had great steaks and great food for those late night sessions.

Tom was all business. He stayed in shape, running at noon every day. Tom was well rounded, and he treated you very well. He had a boat he loved to fish from and would have a big fish fry for the coaches and their families. But Tom was serious most of the time. Tom was very organized. I learned to put life in order from Tom Osborne, to do things in a time-related way. I learned to make an agenda for practice, an agenda before I went on the road to recruit. Tom, Monte, and I were usually the first guys in the office every morning. Some days Tom would already be there, other days I would beat him. I would write out the practice schedule, first scribbling down the full-team work schedule, then figuring out the individual drills, and finally crafting the special teams outline. Then I would ask Tom, "Is this right?" He would tell me, "Take five minutes off this and put it over there," and so forth. Next, I would go write the schedule on the board in the meeting room. When the other coaches got there for the staff meeting, we would put in the plays we were going to run. Tom would ask the coaches about different plays and I would tell him that I hadn't seen this play against the slant defense. We would put that in for the offense to run that day. Another coach might say he would like to see a certain play against a Cover-2, so we would put that in the schedule for the scout team to show the defense.

As I said, Tom didn't use profanity. Nobody cussed around Tom Osborne. His teams didn't cuss on the field. It was a quiet atmosphere out there. The practices were quiet. Everything was on paper, and we went from one drill to the next, just like clockwork, like the military. We had over 140 or 150 guys out for football—it was something. They were going here, running there. We had two scout squads for defense, two for offense. First-string offense at the run station. Second-string offense at the spread station. After twenty minutes, they would switch. The black shirts—the first-string defense—were at their station, and on the whistle they switched with the gold shirts, which was the second-string defense. It was something. And the freshmen were off on another field. Later when I got to Ohio State, I didn't know how we could run a football practice when I looked up one morning and we only had sixty-two guys. I said, "How are we going to practice?" I didn't understand how Woody was going to do that, but he did of course. But Nebraska was very different.

Tom was the coach you would want your own son to play for. Tom's style of coaching was, if you were not putting out, he wasn't going to be bothered with you. He didn't have to give you a pep talk. If you did not have it in you to play hard, then he was not going to coach you. With more than a hundred out, he didn't need to. There was no hollering at the players. If you did not want to do it, we would just get someone else to do it because we had so many guys to choose from. I learned from Tom that hollering and screaming all the time didn't do anything. One time we were playing in the Sugar Bowl

down in New Orleans. Since Tom did not cuss, you knew he was extremely angry if he said, "Gall Dang" or "Judas Priest." Well, that day in New Orleans we weren't playing well. In the locker room, just before the start of the second half, Tom turned and said to the team, "I want you to go out and knock the hell out of them." My big tackle's jaw dropped and he fell weak-kneed up against the wall, it shocked him so. It had to be real bad for Tom Osborne to say that. He always kept that quiet voice, so you know how bad we must have been playing that game. The shock worked because we ended up winning that game.

I learned from Tom that if you do not think a guy is giving you everything, do not holler at him. Just coach someone else. If he does not want to do it, he does not want to do it. Just coach someone else and that guy will get the message. Of course, it might be a week or two before we would get back to him once he got that message, a week or two before we gave him another shot.

Tom taught me how to recruit—the way to present yourself—in a person's living room. Tom was a great recruiter. All business, he had a plan laid out. He was going to tell you, the parent, all the positive things about the University of Nebraska, everything that your son could expect, what we were going to do for your son, and what we expected your son to do for us. The way he delivered his message was quite different from the way Coach Hayes delivered his, different from the way Earle Bruce delivered his.

Tom won 255 games at Nebraska, yet there was a time fans wanted him gone because he couldn't beat Oklahoma. Barry Switzer was beating him. Of course, Nebraska had had some lean years earlier when Bud Wilkinson was rolling at Oklahoma, and then Bob Devaney came in and the Huskers started beating the Sooners. So Tom followed a tough act. It was like Earle following Woody. Here's how Tom describes it:

> Bill came in at a time when Nebraska was going strong. There was a lot of interest and excitement in Nebraska football because we had won the national championships in '70 and '71, and then Bill came here in '72. After Bill came, we still had good records. We usually were 9-3 or 10-2, but I think a lot of people kept comparing me to Bob Devaney, and compared whatever success we had to '70-'71, the two years where they were undefeated. The bar was really high when Bill came here and I took over. People weren't mutinous, but they weren't real happy either sometimes, so Bill had that experience as well. It's tough to follow a legend sometimes.

Tom was winning, but we did struggle against Oklahoma, and as he said, he was following a legend. The natives were after him. Imagine that with Tom's legacy! Then all of a sudden, he started putting it on Oklahoma. Boom. Boom. Boom. That was the end of the "Get Rid of Tom Osborne" talk.

I will sum up Tom Osborne this way: I don't think you could pay Tom Osborne enough in the wages coaches are paid today. If you could go to a school today and say to them, "I'll be your head coach for twenty-five years. I won't swear. I'll never do anything to embarrass your school. I'll never win

less than nine games in any season for twenty-five years. And oh, by the way, we'll also win thirteen conference championships, three national championships, and go to a major bowl game every year during those twenty-five years! I'll win 255 games for you. After I retire, I'll be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives to represent your state. And after that, I'll come back and be your athletic director at a time when you need a steady hand to rebuild your programs and lead you into the Big Ten." Do you know what a Division I football school would pay someone for that now? There is no amount that would be too much for a school to pay for that today. That is what Tom Osborne did at Nebraska. I can't think of any other coach that ever did that. Even the great Frank Leahy at Notre Dame never did that. It's the legacy of Tom Osborne, and that legacy is what Nebraska is bringing now to the Big Ten. And there I was soaking it all in.

Big Red Traditions: The Cornhuskers of course had their own traditions. The Nebraska stadium was the reddest place I had ever seen. Ohio Stadium didn't get red until recently. When I came to Ohio State in the '70s I thought, "This place is nothing like Nebraska." At Nebraska, the place was solid red. I had red boots, red pants, a red cowboy hat; they gave us all that stuff at Nebraska. We all had red cars. Everything was red. Ohio Stadium is red now, but Nebraska was all red, even back in the '70s.

At the time I started in Lincoln, there was a limit of 120 scholarships, and later it went down to maybe 105. But Nebraska was famous for its walk-on program. If a player was a tweener, we didn't give him a scholarship. He would walk on. My last season there, seven out of our top fifty were walk-ons. Tom always saved one or two scholarships, as did Bob Devaney, and as did Jim Tressel. The walk-ons that earned a scholarship might have been better than some that came on a scholarship, because in order to get a scholarship as a walk-on, a player had to be a starter or a backup—that is, make the first twenty-two offense or first twenty-two defense.

Later at Ohio State, I wanted to get a real walk-on program started, but so many big schools recruit the state of Ohio it was hard to do. Some of the guys that walked on at Nebraska turned down scholarships to Iowa State, to Kansas, or to Kansas State. These were other Big Eight schools and the kids turned down scholarships to walk on at Nebraska! My last year there, Clete Pillen was a walk-on who played linebacker for me. Clete once said, "I knew from the age of nine that I wanted to play for Nebraska." Not only did he play, but in that fifth year he was team captain and a second team All-American. A walk-on at Nebraska who got a scholarship had proved himself in battle. The guy who got the scholarship right off the bat had proved himself in high school, but he might not play at Nebraska. But walk-ons who got scholarships, they were good!

Nebraska is a unique state. Ohio has a population of 11.5 million. Nebraska has 1.8. You drive though that state, and pull into one of those small towns, and they will have a signboard at the city limits, "So and So Played for the Huskers." Now he may have played for the Huskers ten years ago, but his name is still on there. People are so proud. One of our guys made it! All his life, as a little kid, that guy was out there on that plow thinking, "I wanna be

a Cornhusker." Nebraska has one big school in the state. In contrast, take a kid in Toledo. He might have grown up a Buckeye, a Spartan, or (heaven forbid) a Wolverine. Maybe he is a Toledo Rocket, a B.G. Falcon, even a Fighting Irish. That kid has options. But you just don't understand how close the Huskers are. If you are a Husker, you are something. If you are a Buckeye you are something, but out there it is a little different. It's "one of our guys made it." Look at John Hicks. He's a great Buckeye. But how many guys have come down here from Cleveland and played? Nebraska only takes ten or twelve guys from their state each year. Ohio State takes twenty.

Blackshirts: You have probably heard of the Nebraska defense called the "Blackshirts." I should explain that term. It started long before I arrived. The legend goes back to the early '60s and the rule change that permitted two-platoon football. Devaney wanted to have the defense distinguished from the offense by different jerseys during practice. Bob told his assistant Mike Corgan to get some pullover jerseys. The story goes that a local store cut him a deal on black ones because they had a bunch that no one else wanted. Apparently, Mike never thought about the reason no one wanted them—that they were hotter than dickens.

Originally, they gave everyone the shirts, but over time it became just the first-string defense. Line coach George Kelly is said to have triggered the nickname when he was heard rallying the "Blackshirts" during practice. That stuck, and it became a symbol for the Husker defense that endures today. Of course, the term Blackshirts has sometimes been used to describe fascist organizations in World Wars I and II. But the Nebraska Blackshirts were nothing of the sort. It was just one of those accidental quirks of history, and today represents Cornhusker pride in their tough, hard-nosed, and tenacious defense. After all, you have to be tough to practice in the hot prairie sun in a black shirt.

The Staff: Nebraska had lots of tradition. The best, though, was the people. I was lucky to be surrounded by good assistants. That staff overflowed with talent. Jim Ross was freshman coach and assistant athletic director to Bob Devaney. That first spring, our desks adjoined and I learned a lot because Jim was Devaney's right-hand man. He had worked with Bob in high school and followed him to Wyoming and then Nebraska, so they had a longstanding relationship. You didn't do anything around Jim you didn't want Bob to know. They were close. It helped the staff, though. Jim could calm Bob down when he got angry. Jim didn't butter up to anyone, and he was the only guy who could tell Devaney what he thought and get away with it. He would tell Bob, "You stink. This stinks. That's not right." A coach needs somebody like that, somebody who can be honest with him. It helped to make us a good staff.

Cletus Fischer of the famous Fischer football family was my fellow line coach. Clete's brother Rex played for both the St. Louis Cardinals and the Washington Redskins. Clete's three or four other brothers had played at Nebraska, and his sons played there too. Clete had played at Nebraska in the forties, and he was a Husker through and through. He had been a Nebraska

All-Stater playing their six-man football in high school. Cletus really believed the line in their fight song, "There is no place like Nebraska." If you were not from Nebraska, he didn't think much of you. Clete got me to calling Purdue "Par-doo." "There's nobody over in that league," he would snarl, "they just got Par-doo!" The "u" was an "a" the way he pronounced it. Par-doo! "They don't have anything over at Par-doo. We could beat them," he would say. Cletus didn't think anything outside of Nebraska was any good. Of course, Clete had the whole state of Nebraska to recruit by himself. Cletus was a good man who taught me a lot of football. We both had deep, booming voices. We would close the door and be in there chalk talking, and the rest of the coaches would tease us. "I don't know why you close the door," they would laugh. "We still hear everything you guys are saying."

Mike Corgan was another on that staff, and probably one of the best backfield coaches I have ever been around. Mike had played halfback at Notre Dame in the '30s. He developed Mike Rozier, who won the Heisman in 1983, the year after Corgan retired. Mike was just the opposite of Tom. Mike would figure out, "How can I say this *as nasty* as possible?" He was one tough customer.

Warren Powers was defensive backfield coach. Warren had been a halfback at Nebraska before playing defensive back for the Oakland Raiders, and then joining the Nebraska staff. Warren went to Lillis High School, a Catholic school not too far from my Kansas City neighborhood. He lived near me growing up, but I didn't know him until he began recruiting in Kansas City for the Huskers. Warren's high school coach, Joe Minter, liked me and was one of the people who told Nebraska to come look at me. Being a Kansas City guy, Warren probably also told Tom Osborne about me, because Warren recruited Kansas City and knew me. Warren went on to become head coach at Missouri.

Monte Kiffin was our defensive coordinator, and I coached under him the last two years. Monte, too, had played at Nebraska. He was really into defense. Monte used the Cover-2 defense while he was at Nebraska. They play it in the pros now, and that defense became famous in Tampa when Monte was there with Tony Dungy. The development of this defense was a progression. Oklahoma first started what was the 5-4 under Bud Wilkinson in the forties and fifties, when they won forty-seven straight games. Gomer Jones—who had been an All-American center at Ohio State—was Bud's line coach, and then succeeded him when Wilkinson retired. Bud and Gomer both were running the 5-4 defense. But passing wasn't much of the game at that time. It was a running game that they had to stop. When the passing game became a standard part of football, coaches switched from the 5-4 to the 5-3, which allowed them to have two halfbacks and still put a guy in the middle for a Cover-3 defense.

Most of the time, everyone was playing this Cover-3 back then, and had three guys back there playing thirds of the field. But when Nebraska went to the Cover-2, we could have nine guys up there close to the line of scrimmage. Oklahoma was beginning to run their Wishbone offense, and we needed someone lightning quick, who could get into the alley and defend the pitch. So Monte developed his Cover-2. Today everybody calls it the Tampa 2, but

Monte was running it way back at Nebraska against the Oklahoma Wishbone. Monte kept it simple, but we could cover everything that was thrown at us.

Monte was a character. He really worked hard, but he wasn't interested in anything but football. He would lose the money to take the team to the movies. It was a good thing Monte was in Lincoln and not New York City. Monte never took his keys out or locked his car. He would go to the airport, fly somewhere, and leave his car in the lot with the keys in it. One time someone stole his car and he was all upset about it, but what do you expect? The keys were in the car and the car unlocked. That was Monte.

Monte was a great coach and would do anything for his players; but at that time, he was a little behind as far as society goes. Ohio State snagged Jim Moore, a good player whom Monte was trying to recruit for Nebraska. OSU got Jim all because of Monte's terminology. Now Monte Kiffin had and does have the biggest heart of anybody around. He loved everybody. He had coached many black athletes and got along with them very well; but this was the 1970s, and Monte was still saying "colored." We had come from colored, to Negros, to blacks and African Americans; yet Monte was still saying "colored." When I got to Ohio State two years later, Jimmy Moore said to me, "Colored. Shoot, I knew I couldn't go to Nebraska. I liked Monte, but man, I thought, they must be way behind out there. They're still saying colored!" Don't get me wrong. I am only sharing this because it is history, and amusing. Monte had a good heart and got along well with blacks, coached a lot of them in the pros and, of course, coaches them to this day. But here it was the mid-'70s, and my race was still "colored" as far as he was concerned. He didn't mean any harm by it; that was just Monte. His single focus was football.

One time I wanted to play a guy, but Monte wouldn't let me. The guy was a whale of a player, but undisciplined. He wouldn't play our scheme. The next year, Warren, Monte, and I all left, and that kid made All-Conference. But he was still doing things his way. What I learned at Nebraska was, if the player doesn't do it your way, you don't play him. Your job depends on the kid doing what you tell him to do. It was one of the things I tried to tell hundreds of players at Nebraska and later at Ohio State, and even when they went pro. You better learn the book! You can be better than the guy athletically, but if you don't play it "their way," you are going to sit. I look at the Oakland Raiders now. They have athletes playing their own system all over the field. I watch the Cleveland Browns. They are doing the same thing. In contrast, look at New England. If a guy has A-gap responsibility, you will see him in A-gap. That principle was really stressed at Nebraska. In high school I had started to make guys play what I wanted, or they would sit. I would talk to them and bug their ears about why I wanted them to do this. "I know you see the play going over there," I would tell them, "but your responsibility is here, in this gap, until this thing happens, and then you go pursue the ball." I was beginning to coach that way, but it really sunk in at Nebraska. At Nebraska if you didn't play the scheme, you sat.

The scheme Monte ran was simple. Monte coached the defensive tackles and middle guards, and they learned how to play four techniques. All they had to learn was four things—but they had to know those inside and out. You played outside eye. You played nose up. You played inside eye. And you

played the slant. You could go to Nebraska and play defense four years, and that is all you had to master. But you had to be able to do those four things anytime and every time, do them every single down! Everyone knew what we were doing. They would look at films and say, "Shoot, all they are doing is this and this." But we could do it. They couldn't stop it. I got that from Monte Kiffin.

Husker Heaven: Nice Equipment. Red cars. Great staff. That was just part of what made my Nebraska leap "from the outhouse to the penthouse." Anyone can have good equipment, good facilities, good coaches—but good players make the program. There was no shortage of those either, when I made my first run onto that field in Memorial Stadium, so named to honor the Nebraskans who served and fell in this nation's wars.

Imagine being a mechanic and someone brings you an Indy race car to work on, or being a high school violinist and someone hands you a Stradivarius. Picture being a weekend golfer and Jack Nicklaus gives you his clubs, or imagine you are a minor league centerfielder and Willie Mayes hands you his bat. That was how I felt when I went to Nebraska with all these All-Americans, and suddenly I was coaching them. It was that big a jump. I remember and cherish something about every single player I coached, but since I haven't room for them all, I will tell you about some Huskers who were a cut above.

Rich Glover came from New Jersey, and when I got to Nebraska, this senior was quite the player. Rich was good friends with Daryl White, who played tackle for me. Daryl had been recruited by Ohio State, but I don't know if Rich had been. I don't think Rich had an offer from Ohio State, so Monte Kiffin talked them into Nebraska instead, when Daryl and Rich decided to go to school together. Nebraska ended up with an All-American offensive tackle and an All-American middle guard—who was also a Lombardi and Outland Trophy winner—all because Rich Glover and Daryl White were friends. Woody lost Daryl White to Nebraska the same way they had lost Thunder Thornton to Nebraska in the early '60's—because Ohio State didn't offer both guys a scholarship.

My offensive line was always working against Rich in the defensive drills, and he took a liking to me. Rich didn't say much, but rather was a quiet, sleepy-looking guy. Rich didn't get excited about anything. The most you could get out of Rich was "three and out." Their defensive film reels were not very big because it was always "three and out." That defense was good.

Rich would call me on Sundays. If we talked for two minutes and I asked, "Rich, Lorita is cooking dinner, you wanna come out?" that conversation was over. If I did not say that, he would listen to me ramble on for half an hour, because he was waiting for me to say, "You wanna come out for dinner?" Eventually I would get around to popping the question, and I'd say, "Rich, we're getting ready to have dinner out here. You and your buddies want to come?"

"Yeah, Coach!" Bang. Down went the phone. He was on his way. He was waiting on that invitation the whole time we were talking. If I was coaching today, I couldn't do that, I couldn't have that kind of father to son

relationship with a kid. It is a shame. Back then we could do so much more to help the kid off the field.

Rich was the best nose guard I was ever around. He was bigger than Aaron Brown, whom we had when I came to Ohio State. Glover would line up over the center and his helmet was almost on the other guy. His head was over the ball—I mean you couldn't put a piece of sandpaper between his head and the center. You would hear the official telling him, "You gotta back up, Number 79, you gotta back up." If he hadn't been Rich Glover, we would have been flagged a lot for offsides, but he was so good he could get away with it. He could jack you up right quick. In 1972, Rich won both the Outland Trophy and the Lombardi Award. There are no bigger awards for a lineman than those two. Those are the lineman's Heisman. In the forty-one years that both awards have been given, the same player has won both awards in the same year only twelve times. Rich Glover was one of those twelve. Actually, only seven schools have had a dual winner and only two schools have had more than one. Both are places I have coached. Ohio State has three, and Nebraska has four. That leaves only five other schools that even had one dual winner. Notre Dame never has. USC never has. Nor has Texas nor Alabama nor Michigan. As of this writing, none of those powerhouse schools has ever had a dual winner. Yet Ohio State has had three and Nebraska four. Ohio State leads the Lombardi with six; Nebraska leads the Outland with nine. What could make an old line coach any prouder than to be able to say he has coached at both those places!

Rich Glover's development was interesting. Freshmen were not eligible then, so his sophomore year they started him at left defensive tackle. He started the first and second game, but he just didn't get the job done. Monte Kiffin was coaching him, so Monte just kept thinking he should be there. Come spring of Rich's sophomore year, Coach Devaney came out of his office one day and said, "Kiffin, move Glover to nose guard." Of course, Monte argued about that. They practiced some more and Glover was not at middle guard. We came in one day, and Devaney came out of his coaching quarters and said, "Monte, I said move him to nose guard."

"Coach, he can't do this and that," Monte replied. Monte kept him at tackle.

This went on for a while, until one day Devaney came in and said, "Hey, I'm *ordering* you to move him to nose guard. If you don't move him to nose guard, he isn't going to play." So they moved Rich to nose guard in the spring before his junior year. He made All-American that year, All-American his senior year, and won both the Outland and Lombardi trophies. Devaney could really spot talent that way. Devaney didn't see Rich doing it at tackle, but when they moved him to nose guard he made All-American *without any preseason publicity!* Here was a guy who started the first two games as a sophomore and couldn't do the job, but the next year was All-American. In 1999, *Sports Illustrated* selected Rich Glover as a starter on their All-Century Team. All because Devaney made Monte Kiffin move him. It was another case of Eddie Robinson's, "It's up to the coach to find the place for the boy."

Rich played in the pros until injuries ended his career. He's been a tremendous friend whom I have tried to help get coaching jobs from time to time.

In 2004, Rich was part of the New Mexico State coaching staff. Rich wasn't fortunate, though, like I was to get in a place where you didn't have to move. When you get in a place like New Mexico State, it is the *other school*. The University of New Mexico is in Albuquerque, and it is the big university in that state, a lot closer to the state capital. New Mexico State is in Las Cruces, in the very southern part of the state, and they don't get the money like the University of New Mexico does. Today, Rich is back home as a head high school football coach in Jersey City, New Jersey.

Rich's buddy Daryl White played offensive tackle for me. Daryl was the first All-American that I ever coached. I can see why Woody had been after him. Daryl fit Woody's line of tackles. He was tall like Woody liked them, very smooth, and a tough kid. He could move, he was graceful, and he could handle his body well. I often wonder if Woody knew about Rich when he was recruiting Daryl, and wonder why he didn't offer him. Woody probably would have gotten two All-Americans. After all, Columbus was a lot closer to New Jersey than Lincoln was. Then again, maybe Woody didn't see Rich Glover as a middle guard. Maybe Woody could see Rich couldn't be a tackle, but didn't offer because he didn't see him as something else. I just keep going back to the days Eddie Robinson and I sat high up in the stands at the NAIA tournament. *It's up to the coach to find the position for the boy*. That has been a theme with me all of my coaching life and I have tried to live it. I think where most coaches make a mistake is they coach from a negative way. What can't he do? It has always been my philosophy to coach with "What can he do? What does he do?" Then it is up to me as the coach to put him in a position where he can succeed.

Willie Harper was from Toledo Scott, Jim Parker's school. Willie was an amazing player who could run with the best of them. He had a big 'fro, the style at the time. He had been a guard when they recruited him, but at Nebraska they put him at defensive end and linebacker. He blossomed there as a two-time All-American. Once again, it was finding the position for the boy. Willie went on to the San Francisco 49ers and played linebacker when they were winning all those Super Bowls. He got himself a bunch of rings. Willie is a minister now. I never knew Willie's middle name until after he graduated. He had a Cadillac, and one time when he left town he asked me to keep it in my garage. There on his dashboard was his name, Willie Miles Harper.

Marvin Crenshaw was another big man from Toledo who played right tackle for me at Nebraska. He was the right tackle when Daryl White was playing left tackle. Daryl was All-American for two years and then Crenshaw earned All-American his last year. Marvin Crenshaw was a tall, thin guy, about six-foot-six and a half inches, and weighed about 230. He wasn't big like my other tackles, but he had long arms and understood the system.

Rik Bonness was my All-American center and one of the greatest ever to play that position at Nebraska. Rik came in the fall of my first season and at eighteen years old and 207 pounds, he started as a true freshman. I was just out of high school, coaching a starter just out of high school, on the defending national champions. You have to be tough to do that, and Rick was a tough kid. He started all four years he was in Nebraska and went on to play linebacker for five seasons in the NFL.

In 1975, when I convinced Tom Osborne to let me move over to defense, there were two guys over there I will always remember coaching. James Wightman was a big linebacker from Omaha. James was a real good player, but he didn't want to play the scheme. I had to work with him constantly to get him to play the defense that was called. Wightman was a tough city kid, streetwise in some ways, and did not want to do everything by the book. As I said, if you were not going to play the scheme, we were not going to play you; I did not care how good you were. James finally got it together and became a good player who started for me the two years I coached linebackers.

James was a good linebacker on scholarship. But he was paired with a walk-on linebacker named Cletus Pillen, who was even better. Clete was the farm boy from Nebraska who had wanted to play for the Huskers since he was nine years old. Cletus Fischer recruited him, but he didn't have a scholarship for someone who was only six feet and 180 pounds. So he convinced Pillen to walk on. That sure paid off when Clete earned a scholarship and became a captain. We had Wightman, the big city boy, playing weak side linebacker and Pillen, the farm boy from Columbus, Nebraska, at strong side linebacker. Clete once told Kenny Miller, a Nebraska writer, the secret to a walk-on earning a scholarship: "If you're not a practice player, you're not going to start at Nebraska," he emphasized. "The pressure never lets up. Every practice was filmed and that's what brought the cream to the top."

Clete was one tough kid for his size, as he showed in the 1975 Nebraska-Oklahoma game. He got taken out by a high-low double team that hyperextended his knee. Our trainer George Sullivan iced it and then taped it. "Maybe he will be able to go back in later in the game, but it's not likely," George told us. The next series Clete Pillen was back on the field. As the clock wound down at the end of that game, he was named by ABC-TV as Player of the Game for Nebraska. In 1976, his senior year, Cletus Pillen was First Team All-Big Eight, Big Eight Defensive Player of the Year, and Second Team All-American. Not bad for a kid they said was too small for a scholarship. The walk-ons have to earn it. Clete Pillen did.

All-American players! Brilliant coaches! Marvelous mentors! Guys who had been at all these different schools as coaches, guys who had all this experience! I was just soaking it up. It was a perfect place for a young coach hungry to know, and I was just a big old sponge soaking it all up. *The place I sought had sought me.* Nothing could top it.

Or so I thought, until *he* came after me!

Chapter 18

THERE'S A CERTAIN SCHOOL

I learned at Nebraska that football was more than coaching. Recruiting was a big part of the job, and something I had not experienced in high school. When I got to Nebraska, I was given the state of Ohio. Thunder Bill Thornton had opened that Ohio pipeline and I was to continue to exploit it by recruiting the Buckeye State for the Huskers. I knew about Ohio because I had visited Lorita in college there. I had no idea at the time, though, where that pipeline would eventually lead me.

Bill Thornton had played at Toledo Libbey in the late 1950s, and I explained how Woody recruited Bill but couldn't get him because he opted for Nebraska. Then Thornton started coaching and got Willie Harper to go to Nebraska. Willie was from Toledo Scott. Now, Toledo Scott was the school that Jim Parker came from in 1953, and Woody couldn't get Willie. Woody worshipped Jim Parker and here was Woody several years later, and he couldn't even get a recruit from Jim's old school. Woody was mad! Nebraska was taking his boys.

When I took over for Thornton, I tried to do the same thing. Everywhere Woody went, they would tell him all the schools coming to see the kid Woody was after, and they would say Nebraska. This hadn't been happening before. Then I took some guys out of Toledo and Woody started looking for me. I got on his radar! First it was that Bill Thornton, and now this new Bill had come in, this Bill Myles guy, trying to do the same thing. I was trying to learn everything I could about Woody Hayes, and the people at Nebraska would say to me that I worshiped the man. "No," I answered, "I'm just studying Woody. He's winning all the time, and I'm recruiting against him, so I've got to study the man." That was my first contact with Woody Hayes. I not only scouted the recruits, I scouted Woody because he was my competition. I scouted Woody and studied him because I had to recruit against him and he ruled Ohio. And he was a winner. As I have said, I was ready to learn from anybody, and Woody was plain and simple a winner. It was no secret that Woody had a temper, so I studied the things that might cause him to blow up. When I knew he would be following me at some point to see a recruit, I would drop these little things at opportune times and places. Now understand, I never tried to say anything negative about him. I admired his work ethic and all of that, but I did tell the recruits it took a special individual to play for him. At the same time, I was recruiting against him, going head to head for the same players, and I was going to use any advantage. So I would plant little innocent ticking time bombs, things for them to ask Woody, things that I knew would set him off!

I learned a lot from Woody. Woody wasn't the smartest coach, and he

always said he wasn't the smartest coach. I say this about Woody Hayes, though: "He could take his and beat yours, and he could take yours and beat his," because he was going to outwork you. He followed the same philosophy in recruiting.

The Other Side of the Mississippi: I was in downtown Cleveland one year at the big All-City Banquet at Cleveland East Tech. At the time, I had never personally met Woody, but he was there to speak, and obviously I was there to recruit for Nebraska. During dinner, Woody looked up from the speakers' table and saw me out there in the crowd. He looked right at me! Although he had never met me, there were not too many college coaches with Afros then, so I was easy to recognize. As soon as he looked at me, he just pushed his prepared speech aside and started writing on his napkin. Then he got up to speak, never once looking at the speech he had originally brought. He had everything he wanted to say right on that simple napkin.

"You know, Ohio State is a great school," he opened. "Ohio boys ought to go to Ohio State. Now, there is a *certain school* on the other side of the Mississippi River. They play pretty good football, but they don't do what The Ohio State University does. A good Ohio lad just wouldn't ever think of going to that school." He never called us by name. Nebraska was just a "*certain school* on the other side of the Mississippi."

"It's a different culture over there," he continued. "*There's another school on the other side of the Mississippi.* Now, they play pretty good football. It's a good school. But it's not Ohio. They don't understand Ohio people. They don't understand Ohio boys. Now, you boys are from a big city. They don't have a big city out there. Ohio boys ought to go to Ohio State."

On and on he went. That was his whole banquet speech. Ohio boys ought to go to Ohio State. He kept talking about this "*certain school* on the other side of the Mississippi." Now, they don't play fair, they don't do this, they don't do that. What do they have in that school that you would want? So on and so forth. On he went. He just tore me up standing up there at that podium. He never once said Nebraska by name.

Of course, the whole time Gary Jeter, Gene Smith, and Ross Browner, the guys he and I were both after, were sitting there in the audience, and I was thinking, "Geeze. I'm not going to get to have a rebuttal." He did me in that night and all of it off the cuff. And he had never even met me! Yes, sir, right off those notes he wrote on that napkin. "*Ohio boys ought to go to Ohio State.*"

Of course, Woody wasn't the only one practicing the gamesmanship. I had read all his books, and I was studying Woody's every move. As I said, I'd tell the recruits what to say when he came visiting their homes. I knew all his hot buttons. I would tell the kids and the parents, "Now, when Coach Hayes comes, ask him why a tackle should come there when he already has six or seven of them!" They would drop the little bombs I had planted, and, of course, later they would tell me how he would get red and grimace and then blow his cork!

Recruiting Ray Griffin: Woody and I went head to head on Raymond Griffin. I recruited Ray for Nebraska, and Ray visited Lincoln. He liked it.

Ray wanted to be a Husker. We were recruiting him and it wasn't because of Archie. Ray liked that. It was a chance to get out of Archie's shadow, to be his own big show. Plus, Nebraska had won a national championship not too long before.

It was uphill from the start, though. Raymond's coach at Eastmoor, Bob Stuart, was a friend of Woody's and had sent Archie to Ohio State. Stuart helped Woody recruit Ray. Early in the recruiting process, I was over at the school one day, visiting by myself with Raymond, and all of a sudden, Bob Stuart came in. Behind Bob came Woody Hayes! Woody came in, and when he looked over and saw me, he said all nice and sweet and innocent, "Oh, hi, Coach, don't pay me much attention." Now, I am in the room recruiting a kid for Nebraska and in walks my competition, and I am not supposed to pay any attention to the elephant in the room! What do you think the odds are that Woody Hayes would show up just by chance, at the exact time that Bill Myles arrived all the way from Lincoln, Nebraska? I think those odds are precisely zero! Woody *knew* I was going to be there. He knew *when* I was going to be there. He knew it from Bob Stuart. Stuart later admitted that to me! There Woody was, standing there, grinning, looking as syrupy and innocent as could be.

In spite of these challenges, Raymond still wanted to come to Nebraska, so I took Tom Osborne to Columbus, Ohio, to the Griffin house, to seal the deal. Mrs. Griffin welcomed us in and said, "We're not going to do anything until my husband gets here." James Griffin, Sr. ran that house. Mrs. Griffin made us sandwiches, rolls, coffee, and lunch; but she didn't say a thing about school until Mr. Griffin got there. Bob Stuart, Raymond's coach, was there, and poor Raymond sat there all that time, waiting. He couldn't tell his mother how he liked Nebraska, how badly he wanted to go there.

Ray was ready right then to go to Nebraska. He had a terrific time out there when he visited, he liked us, and he would have signed the papers right then if he could have. But we just sat there waiting for dad. Ray was a whale of an artist and he had drawn a big picture of Archie in his Ohio State uniform. They had it there in the house and we looked at it and made small talk while we waited. Finally, Mr. Griffin came home. James Griffin had several jobs, and he had just come home for lunch, coming from one job and going to another. Tom and I gave our pitch, laid out our talk. Raymond's dad just listened. He didn't say a thing. He just listened.

Finally, he said very slowly and deliberately, "We-l-l-l-l. Sounds good coach . . . But you know . . . I like to see my boys play . . . I watch Archie play over at the Horseshoe . . . And then I get into my car after the game to drive down to Louisville to see my other son play there . . . I'd have a hard time getting to Lincoln." We knew then. Raymond wasn't going to Nebraska. Raymond wanted to go so bad and he just sat there. There was nothing he could do. What Mr. Griffin said went. He ran that household. Tom sat there for about two or three more minutes. We ate the rest of our rolls. We said goodbye. That was it. We knew we were not going to get Ray Griffin, and we were out of there. Of course, Raymond became an All-American at Ohio State.

While at Nebraska, I did get Kenny Brown, Gary Higgs, and Earl Everett. I recruited a fullback, Andra Franklin from Anniston, Alabama. And there were

the guys I tried to recruit and didn't get, including Eddie Beamon, Aaron Brown, Kelton Dansler, and Todd Bell. But the best one is the year I had Ross Browner, Gary Jeter, Marvin Powell, and Steve Anderson. They were all the bluest of the blue chippers that year. I, Bill Myles, had them all for the Huskers. I had them all going into the home stretch. It's quite a story, and I'll come back to that in a bit.

Coming After Me: Someone once asked me if other coaches tried to lure me away from Nebraska. I replied, "Where do you go from Nebraska?" You'd look crazy going to Colorado or even my home state of Missouri from Nebraska. Why would you go to Arkansas from there? Why would you go to Wyoming, to California, or Iowa? Why would you go to Wisconsin? I had already arrived. Nebraska was the national champion two years in a row. I was coaching at the top, and I was having success recruiting.

Still, that didn't mean people didn't come after me, and one of those who did was Woody Hayes. I was pulling guys out of Ohio in the '70s and luring them to Lincoln, continuing what Bill Thornton had started for Nebraska. Something had to be done to stop that, so Woody Hayes came after me. He figured out how to kill two birds with one stone. Three times he came after me. Tom Osborne explains how it started:

> Bill was always fascinated with Woody Hayes. When Woody called, that was a big deal to Bill, and there was one particular incident that probably led to Woody being attracted to Bill. There was a young man named Greg Whetsel from a small town in Ohio. Greg was recruited by Ohio State, Michigan, USC, and Nebraska. Bill was the particular individual recruiting Greg from Nebraska, and of course, all those other schools after him were the top schools at that point. Greg came to Nebraska. I think Woody was impressed by the fact that Bill Myles, in the midst of all that competition, could get Greg Whetsel from a small town in Ohio to come to Lincoln, Nebraska. After that, I think Woody was quite interested in Bill.

Woody was interested, quite interested as Tom says, and he came after me three times. The first time Woody approached me was in Columbus. I was always talking about Ohio State, so Tom Osborne sent me to Columbus to get Woody's goal line offense, the "Robust." I was at Ohio State, and we were working on it one day when Woody came in the office and saw me with the assistants. I was looking at the goal line offense when Woody asked me, "Bill, what do you tell the backside guard on the counter sweep? What do you tell him to do?"

"Coach, I tell him that when he can see the numbers on the frontside guard, he turns in. When he can't see the numbers, he goes around and hooks him."

Woody stood there at the door with his hand on his chin and mused . . . hmm . . . hmm . . . uh-uh . . . uh-uh. Finally he spoke. "Coaches, in one sentence Bill just told us what we've got three paragraphs in our playbook to cover. He told us all that by just looking at the guy's numbers."

Now, on the counter sweep both guards pull. The backside guard follows the front side guard into the hole, and he needs to read how to block it. If he can see the numbers on the back of the guard in front of him, he knows the defender came across and the front side guard is kicking him out. The backside guard turns in to seal the hole to the inside and the play is going between them. But if he can't see the numbers, he knows the defender closed down and the front side guard pinned him inside. In that case, he hooks around to seal off the next man, and the play will likely go outside.

I had covered everything the guard needed to know by just looking at the guy's numbers. Woody had all these things in his book—what you do on the counter sweep, how you do it, when you do it—and I'd just condensed it into two sentences.

I didn't know then, but I was being auditioned. I had been there maybe a day when the guys asked me, "Would you be interested in coming to Ohio State?"

"No," I said. Later on, I got to thinking about it, and I quizzed them. "Why do you ask?"

"Woody wants to know if you're interested in coming to Ohio State."

"I just got to Nebraska," I answered, "and I owe them something. I owe Tom Osborne. He gave me my start, my chance. I owe Tom and I can't do that right now."

The second time was a few years later, when I called Ohio State and was talking to Ralph Staub, a friend of mine. Joe Bugel had left Ohio State to go coach with the Washington Redskins, so I called Ralph and told him that I wanted to recommend a coach to replace Joe, a graduate assistant I knew. I started naming all the qualifications of the guy, but Ralph didn't warm up. Finally, I said to him, "Ralph, I thought we were friends. You're awful cold today. What's the matter?"

"We're not going to hire a graduate assistant," Ralph told me. "We don't know what a graduate assistant does. He could be a gopher for all we know, and we don't know what this guy you are recommending does. Anyway, the person Woody is really interested in hiring is you. Woody wants you! That's who he wants."

"Well, I'm staying with Tom," I answered. "I'm not available. I owe something to Tom. Tom came and got me. Tom gave me my break. I was just calling you to recommend this other guy, a guy whose father had been a great coach in the high schools and small colleges in Nebraska." That was the second time Woody Hayes came after me.

Last Call: The third time, Woody himself just called Nebraska. It was February of 1977. We were in a coaches' meeting when a secretary walked into the meeting and said, "Coach Myles, Woody Hayes is on the phone and wants to talk to you."

I went back to my office. The voice on the other end of the line said, "I want to offer you a job at The Ohio State University."

I replied, "Yeah. Okay. Naturally. Yeah. Okay. Sure. Yeah. Right!" I didn't think it was Woody Hayes! I thought it was one of our coaches at Nebraska

trying to pull one on me, since I was always talking about Woody, always studying him and reading about him. I thought it was one of their pranks.

The guy on the line kept on talking. Then he said to me, "This recruit is such and such," and he started naming recruits and saying things that I suddenly realized only Woody would know.

"Coach Hayes?" I asked.

"Yeah," he answered.

"This is really you?" I asked.

"Yeah."

By this point, I felt dumber than a dozen donkeys and I quickly tried to make amends. "I'm sorry. I thought you were one of our Nebraska guys here trying to be funny, because they think I am always talking about you," I told him. "I'm sorry for the way I was . . ."

"Yes, well, you were acting a bit impudent!" Woody interrupted.

Do you believe it? Coach Woody Hayes was calling to offer me a job, and I was joking around with him like the class clown!

Fortunately, Woody continued. "I want to offer you a job to coach at Ohio State University."

"Have you talked to Coach Osborne?" I asked. In those days it was, and still is, customary that you are supposed to get permission from the coach or athletic director to talk to someone who was under contract.

"Naw, I don't know his number," Woody told me. Now, Woody Hayes had just called the Nebraska Football office. I was talking to him on a Nebraska Football phone. Tom Osborne was just down the hall. Yet there Woody was, telling me on that same phone that he didn't know Tom Osborne's number! I told Woody he had to talk to Tom. "I'll call him," Woody grudgingly said.

I hung up and went back to the meeting. Soon the phone was ringing again, and the secretary came in once more. This time she said, "Coach Osborne, Coach Hayes wants to talk to you." Tom picked up the phone, and Woody asked Tom Osborne for permission to talk to me. Then they started arguing! The next thing we knew, Tom was holding the phone out and just looking at it, funny like, and then he hung up. Later, when I went to Ohio State, they told me, "Woody just hung up on him." Woody Hayes hung up on Tom Osborne in that conversation that day!

Tom finally hung the phone up and said to me, "That was Woody and he asked for permission to talk to you."

Ring! There went the phone a third time. It was Woody calling back wanting to talk to me. Now, mind you, all this was going on in the middle of a Nebraska coaches' meeting. "Tell him I'll call him back," I told our secretary. I couldn't leave that meeting a second time. It was a coaches' meeting. All this happened in front of the whole Nebraska coaching staff. Finally, the meeting ended. All that time I was thinking during the meeting that when it was done, I was going to have to call Woody Hayes back. I was going to have to talk to Woody. So when we took a break, I did that. I called Woody Hayes back. Mind you now, this was the fourth call between Nebraska and Columbus. So I called him back and we talked.

After I called Woody, we went into another meeting with just the defensive coaches. I remember Monte Kiffin went to the blackboard and wrote,

"Woody Hayes, 63, Tom Osborne, 40." That was their ages. Then he told me, "You don't want to go out there. Suppose Woody comes up and hits you. He punches you. What are you going to do?"

I said, "Woody's not going to punch me. Nobody's going to punch me."

"Suppose he throws an eraser or a projector at you?" Kiffin named off all these things that Woody supposedly did. They asked me what I would do, so I told them. I told them what I would do. I told them the same thing I would later tell Coach Hayes to his face.

When I called Woody back that day, he offered me a job at Ohio State. Of course, he had all these reasons that I should take it. He would find Lorita a job, things like that, and he wanted me to come out there and see him. He wanted me to come and "just look things over." I decided I needed at least to do that out of courtesy, so I figured I had to go tell Tom Osborne that I was going to visit Woody. I went in to see Tom, and told him that I was going to visit Columbus. "You don't need to go out there," was Tom's answer. "No need in going out there. No need in going to see Woody. Aren't you happy here?"

"Sure I'm happy here," I shot back. "But Woody's done all this. He has three job interviews lined up for my wife while we are out there, and I owe him to go out and visit."

"You don't owe him anything," Tom Osborne answered.

I said, "Well, I'm going." I went back to my office. I was supposed to go to Kansas City that day with my family. I called Lorita to tell her I would be late getting home, and my daughter Debbie answered the phone. I said, "Debbie, put your mother on the phone, I have something important to tell her." She came on and I said, "Lorita, I'll be late getting there. Woody Hayes has been calling me and wants me to coach at Ohio State."

Unbeknownst to Lorita and me, Debbie had never hung up the phone. She was listening on the extension. When I said that, she hollered into the phone, "Let's go. Let's go!" She was a freshman then at Nebraska, and although I hadn't a clue at the time, she had wanted to go to Ohio State all along. She had looked up the out-of-state tuition, and when she saw that, she hadn't mentioned it to us. We didn't know it, but that was where she had really wanted to go to college. I was sitting back there in our office, and while I was talking to Lorita on the phone, the other defensive coaches continued to write things on the board about Woody Hayes. As you can imagine, they were not necessarily complimentary!

Before I left that day, I told Tom, "I'm not going to take the job while I'm at Ohio State. I'm going to tell him that I have to wait forty-eight hours and think it over. They are going to put their best foot forward, and you have got to think I won't remember all the positives here." Tom told me he was going to ask me to do that, but he was glad I came to him on my own. I have seen a lot of kids change their minds after forty-eight hours and I have learned from that. I was determined not to make a rash decision.

Hello, Columbus: Lorita and I flew to Columbus without any intention of taking the Ohio State job. You can't go very far in my profession and have a marriage that endures unless you have a wife who is supportive of what you

do. Lorita has been all of that and more to me. Lorita doesn't like to hear me use this saying, but when Coach Hayes first offered me the Ohio State job, I explained to him that Lorita had her own career, too. "I can't come if things aren't right in the kitchen. I can't do the job for you," I told Woody. When we got to Columbus, Woody had several job interviews lined up for Lorita in her field. They were positions that would allow Lorita to use her talents and education and help smooth the transition from a job she loved in Lincoln to starting over in Columbus. That was the way Woody did things.

We had lunch with Anne Hayes. Anne took Lorita around. She met the athletic director, Ed Weaver, and he talked about how they wanted her more than me. They were really putting it on us. I talked with the assistant coaches all day, and then I was sent into Woody's office. It was one on one, just Woody and me. No one else. Finally, I got around to the gnawing question. I said to Woody, "Coach, they asked me at Nebraska what I would do if you threw an eraser at me or something. They asked, 'What if he punched you, hit you?'"

"What did you say?" Woody inquired.

I had told them I would do one of three things, and I told Woody the very same things. "Coach," I told him, "I said to them that the first time, I would pick up the eraser and take it up to you and say, 'Did you lose something?' The second thing I would probably do would be to pick up the eraser and throw it back at you." And then I said, "The third thing I would do if you ever hit me, I would probably just get up and walk out and that would be the last you would ever see of Bill Myles." Can you imagine? I told Woody Hayes that! On my job interview, I told the Old Man I would walk out on him if he hit me!

It gets better. Woody slid down in his seat, looked right at me, and in the softest of voices with a great big innocent grin, said, "Why, Bill, I've never hit a coach in my life." And you know what? I believed him! I actually believed him when he told me that. He slid down in his chair and with that nice, soft voice and that sheepish, boyish grin, well, I actually believed him! And then of course, when I got there, Woody was hitting some of the assistant coaches all the time! But you know what? He never hit me. Woody Hayes never hit Bill Myles.

I really did believe him that day he interviewed me in his office. I believed he never punched anyone. I mean, Woody Hayes could make you think anything. He could make you think up was down, back was forward, the moon was square and made of green cheese. I believed him that day. He slid down in that chair and looked me right in the eye, and had that finger pointing at me, and said in that soft, quiet, gentle voice, "Why Bill, I've never hit a coach in my life." Woody Hayes, he was something.

After we got back from Columbus and I was actually thinking about leaving Nebraska, I called Jim Julian, who had been my defensive coordinator as a high school coach. I was always calling people for advice, and Jim Julian was a person I respected. So I called Jim and said, "Jim, I've got a chance to leave Nebraska. I've got a chance to go somewhere."

"You're leaving Nebraska?" he responded with disbelief.

"Where would you go from Nebraska?" I asked him.

Jim answered, "The only place I would go from Nebraska would be Ohio State, Southern Cal, and maybe Notre Dame if I was a Catholic."

"You said it first," I bragged.

"Ohio State is offering you a job?"

"Yeah," I said. I had told Tom Osborne that I was going to take forty-eight hours before I would make a decision and I kept my word. On a Sunday morning, I called Coach Hayes at his house. He wasn't there, but Anne Hayes answered and she got in touch with Woody. Woody called me back and as we were talking I asked, "Coach, is that job still available?" I didn't want to tell Tom before I knew for sure I had the job.

"Yes, it is," said Woody.

I breathed a long, deep, measured breath, and then took the plunge, saying, "I would like to join your staff. Lorita and I have decided we're coming to Ohio State."

Then I called Tom. That was tough. Tom asked me, "Are you sure? Have you talked to Woody and all of that?"

"Yes."

It was hard talking to Tom. Remember, Woody had offered me twice before and I had said no. I was loyal to Tom. Tom gave me a chance to go from what I have called the outhouse to the penthouse, meaning from the poorest school districts to the wealthiest institutions. I went from coaching at a school that hadn't won a game to a school that was national champion. I went from having to sell pop and have dances and paper drives in order to buy uniforms, and from buying ten or twelve jerseys a year, to a place where anything you wanted—needed or not—you could get. I was very fortunate and I just have to say God was with me and directed my path. *The place you are seeking is seeking you.* If it is right it will happen. I didn't know I was seeking Nebraska. But it was right and it came along, and it had been wonderful. As Buck O'Neil would say, "I was right on time and things happen on time." Sure, Ohio State was a major powerhouse. But I was at Nebraska. I was with a great coach and a great person. Nebraska won national championships. They, too, were a major powerhouse. You are probably wondering what it was that made me want to make the move. Well, there were a lot of things.

My daughter Debbie wanted to go somewhere else to college and I had talked her into going to Nebraska that first year. I didn't know it at the time, but the somewhere else she wanted to go was O-HI-O. Back then, there were not a lot of blacks in the state of Nebraska, and there were not a lot of opportunities for blacks. Now, don't misunderstand me. Don't get me wrong. We were treated nothing but wonderful and nice and fair by the people of Nebraska. There were a lot of blacks in Omaha. But not in Lincoln, the state capital, and not out in the rural areas—and Nebraska is a rural state. In those days, there were not a lot of us. It was tough on a young female and her social life. Remember, we were just coming off the first phase of the Civil Rights Movement, and doors and opportunities were just starting to open. Attitudes were just starting to change, and the whole country, not just Nebraska, was different for blacks then, compared to today.

Of course for me, Nebraska was heaven because I had football. All I needed was football. My young son Billy liked football. All he needed was football. And being selfish about it, I was able to leave Nebraska when I wanted to. I was going out on the road recruiting during the week and coming home

weekends. I was flying all over. So I visited Columbus. I visited Toledo. I visited Boston. I visited Cincinnati. I visited Atlanta. I visited big cities and I got to do the things I wanted to do. I was coaching football 24/7 and going to bowl games. Nebraska was heaven for me. It was all I needed.

But Lincoln wasn't the best place for Debbie. Woody said Debbie would get a scholarship. Woody didn't take the money the boosters would give him. It was put into a scholarship fund and I think Debbie was about the sixteenth coach's kid to go through on a scholarship. That was where Woody's money went, for the coach's kids' scholarships. That was one of the major things that enticed me to go to Columbus. And Woody had several interviews waiting for Lorita in Columbus. He had lined up three places for her to visit. They were good opportunities that would allow her to continue her career and use her degrees. So going to Columbus was something that I could do for Lorita and Debbie.

Billy, on the other hand, didn't want to go to Ohio State; my son wanted to stay at Nebraska. He was in his world out there. He was looked up to. His dad was on the Big Red staff, so he was in his glory. Tom Osborne's son Mike was about the same age as our Billy, and they became good buddies. One time we were at a bowl game and Billy and Mike wanted to know, "How do they know who we are?" Of course, Mike Osborne was tall, thin, and had red hair and freckles. Billy Myles was stocky, browned skinned, and had a big Afro. And they wanted to know, "How do people know who our dads are?" Billy wasn't yet in high school and he was enjoying life. Nebraska and football were all Billy needed, too.

My family was one big reason I went. But I also said to myself, "You know, I want to be a head coach some day and what better reference could I have than to be able to say I coached at Nebraska and I coached at Ohio State, leaders in their conferences? How many people can say I coached for Bob Devaney, for Tom Osborne, for Woody Hayes?" I mean, to be able to put all that on paper beside my name! I just thought if I could put down on a resume Nebraska and Ohio State, not many people could do that, and I had this desire to have my own show. I thought going to Ohio State might help me become a head coach. Of course, I never got that, but we'll talk about this later.

People have asked if Tom held it against me when I went to Ohio State. If he did, he never showed it. After I left, Tom came to Ohio State and spoke at our clinic. After I went into administration, I would see him at the coaches conventions and we would always talk. I don't think Tom wanted to lose me or look for another guy at that time of the year, but he understood because he had a time schedule and goals of his own. I think Tom understood when I said I thought it would help me in the long run. Who could say that they had Nebraska and Ohio State behind their name? This was the 1970s, and Nebraska and Ohio State were *the powers*. Nebraska was winning national championships and Ohio State was going to the Rose Bowl four times in a row. I think Tom understood.

I think Tom also understood that it would be a little better for my daughter in Ohio. Again, not that we were treated badly, because we were treated very well by the good people of both Lincoln and all of Nebraska. Anybody connected with Nebraska football was like a saint in Nebraska. I don't think

you could ask for a better job than the two I had—Nebraska and Ohio State. But it was the '70s and even then the country was still coming to grips with integration and the Civil Rights Movement. Nebraska was everything I ever needed. It was everything my son Billy needed But it was different for a college-age female like Debbie. In Debbie's own words, here's a big reason why I left the comfort of Lincoln, Nebraska under Tom Osborne to leap into the different and turbulent world of Wayne Woodrow Hayes:

> I think it's fair to say that one of the reasons my father went to Ohio State was he wanted us to be in a more diverse background. I didn't want to move to Nebraska from Kansas City when we did that. I was going into my freshman year in high school in Kansas City, but when I got to Nebraska, ninth grade was still junior high. I had many friends in Lincoln, true friends I still see to this day. But I also knew there were people who just wanted to be my friend because Daddy was a Cornhusker football coach. That was a learning experience. There were very few minorities there and people knew who we were because of Daddy. In the toughest years of my adolescent life I had gone from a community where there was a large African American population to one where there was not. And it was different doing that in 1972 than it would be today. In Nebraska, the first high school I went to had five African Americans, and four of those didn't live there. They were bussed in.
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> One thing I remember Daddy telling me was the world was not black, and I needed to be able to operate in both worlds. I needed to be able to be myself, and work in an African American community, but I also needed to be able to move and live in the real world, which is not black, and not lose myself along the way. There was another reason I wanted to go to Ohio State. I ended up being a marketing major, and when you look at Columbus, it is most representative of the U.S. population. That was important to me. I needed to be able to be comfortable in all those worlds. Daddy kept telling us, "Don't lose yourself."
>
> I always wanted to go to Ohio State. You know why? I remember them being on TV. I remember they had African American cheerleaders. And they had red uniforms with big pretty flowers on the front in those Buckeye leafs. I just thought that would be a great place to go. Whereas Daddy was watching football, I saw they had these pretty African American girls, the Buckeye uniforms, and frankly, I saw more black people on TV when I was watching Ohio State. That was important to a young girl like me in the '60s and early '70s. So when it was time to go to Columbus, that is exactly where I wanted to be, and it is exactly where my father wanted to be. *Place* was at work for both of us!

In March of 1977, I left Billy, Debbie, and Lorita in Nebraska to finish school, and headed to Columbus to become a Buckeye and commence another new journey on the road of life. It had been five years since Tom Osborne had tapped me on the shoulder and knighted me a Cornhusker. I

was leaving behind forty-four wins, twelve losses, and three ties. In my time there, we had never finished lower than ninth in the national rankings, and we had won two Big Eight conference championships and four bowl games. I had taken my family to the Orange, Cotton, Sugar, Fiesta, and Astro Bluebonnet Bowls. Five years, five historic bowls. I must confess, as I packed to leave Lincoln, Nebraska, I did think about all that I was leaving, and wondered what would lie ahead. I would soon find out.

Third Quarter

The Horseshoe
Columbus, Ohio

1977

Chapter 19

WOODY HAYES—THEY BROKE THE MOLD

Each one of us is a part of God's wonderful creation. When I traded my Husker Red for Scarlett and Grey, it didn't take me long though to figure out that God probably broke the mold after he created Wayne Woodrow Hayes. There will never be another like him. I worked for Woody Hayes for only two seasons, but two years with Woody were like Dog Years—the equivalent of fourteen with anyone else. *Bucknuts Magazine* once credited Esco Sarkkinen for saying, "You don't describe Woody Hayes in one word, one sentence, or one paragraph. You describe him with chapter after chapter." Esco was right. Woody Hayes was larger than life and it would take way more ink than I have to do justice to that experience. So in the space I have, I will describe the Woody Hayes I came to know and respect. There are so many aspects of my association with Woody that I can't tell it all in one sitting; thus, I will break it down into five acts. Here goes the first.

ACT I—Working for Woody

As the plane lifted off the runway and banked through the clouds towards my new job in Columbus, I watched the city of Lincoln fade until it disappeared, and I could see myself as a little kid back in Kansas City. It was the 1940s and I was lying on the floor in our living room, listening to a University of Missouri football game on the radio. Of course, I rooted for the Tigers because I lived in Missouri and knew their stars—Phil Klein, John Glorioso, Tony Scardino. I remembered, too, later on as a high school coach going to my first Missouri game after calling Don Faurot to see if I could get in. They were playing Nebraska and the papers reported a sellout, but when I called Don he said, "Oh, come on down, we've got space for a coach."

I thought back to that and how Don Faurot had been a legendary coach at Missouri. In the early forties, he pioneered the Split-T formation and developed Missouri into a national powerhouse. In 1950, Bud Wilkinson had called that Split-T "the most original and significant contribution to offensive football in the last ten years." Of course, Wilkinson had learned that offense when he coached with Don, and later Bud used it to make Oklahoma a powerhouse. The Split-T that Faurot pioneered is thought to have been the first option offense in college football and the ancestor of the Wishbone, the Veer, and today's run-based spread offenses.

As we flew east I thought how past and present were intersecting because

Don Faurot's story also involved the new school I was heading to. When Wes Fesler was fired after the 1950 Snow Bowl, Don Faurot went to Columbus for an interview and accepted the Ohio State head coaching position. When he got back to Missouri, however, Don was reportedly offered more money and he backed out, turning down the Ohio State job. Of course, that left Ohio State in a lurch and opened the door to hiring a relatively young and green coach from a midsized school, one Wayne Woodrow Hayes, the man I was heading to Columbus to work for. What if Don Faurot had not backed out of that Ohio State job? What if he had not gone back to Missouri? Life surely would have been different. There would have been no Woody Hayes—likely no three-yards-and-a-cloud-of dust—and maybe no Bill Myles heading to coach in the Horseshoe. It's funny how life turns on the little things. Thank goodness for the person at Missouri who offered Don Faurot more money!

Becoming a Buckeye: Ohio State was a big-time football program just like the Nebraska I had left. Yet these two schools had completely different ways of skinning the cat. Nebraska believed in large numbers. Woody believed in small numbers. Nebraska had a lot of plays. Woody had a few plays. Nebraska football ran by the clock, and there was no hollering in practice. Woody's practices had hollering and a whole lot more. It was different, but it was organized at both places. It was just "organized mayhem" at Ohio State.

Nebraska had two line coaches, as did Woody and then Earle. But Nebraska did things differently. At Nebraska both coaches had the same system and both coached all the linemen, tackle to tackle. I would have the left side some days while the other coach would have the right side. Then next day the coaches would flop but the players didn't. We would have half line drills, and while the right side would be running plays to the right, the left side would be running to the other side. With two coaches, players became familiar to both, and the coaches could talk about the guys in the meetings, compare notes, share observations, and measure how they were progressing. You had two sets of eyes on each player.

Woody did it differently, and everybody in the Big Ten did it like Woody. With Woody, and later Earle, there were still two coaches, but I had all the tackles and tight ends, while the other coach had the centers and guards. Doing it that way created a problem, though, when we went to skeleton—which was just the receivers, backs, tight ends, and wide outs. Since I had the tackles, I couldn't go down with the tight ends to work on the passing game when we went to skeleton. Of course, Woody wasn't throwing the ball that much so it was no big deal to him.

At Ohio State, you learned a lot of football, but you sometimes didn't even get to football. You had life lessons from Coach Hayes, all in a war-related context. If you listened closely, though, you got a lot of things from Woody. I never understood why some of the guys that worked with Woody didn't pick up on some of the things he did. Woody coached hard and he was on people like you couldn't believe. The one thing I always heard him say that I guess some coaches who worked with me missed was, "It's not you that I dislike, it's the action that I dislike. When you stop jumping offside, we're gonna be okay."

Losing Versus Getting Beat: Woody was very error conscious. For many years, he led the league with the least penalized team. We didn't have referees in practice at Nebraska, but we had them at Ohio State. We had officials calling penalties in practice, so when our guys got in the game, they were used to that. Woody paid these guys. Today everyone does that, but back then, Woody was out front with that idea. Woody didn't beat himself.

I learned a lot from Woody. I mentioned that Woody wasn't the smartest coach, and he always said he wasn't. Tom Osborne outsmarted people. Woody outworked them. Woody Hayes could take his and beat yours, and he could take yours and beat his, because the few things Woody's team was going to do, they were going to do very well. It helped me that many things Woody believed in, I had come to believe in while I was playing high school ball myself. I didn't think that you beat very many people. I think most people beat themselves. I don't think we ever beat Michigan or Michigan ever beat us. I think Michigan lost to us or we lost to Michigan. Now we would beat Northwestern, Indiana, those kinds of teams. We would beat some of those other schools. They didn't have a chance. They could do everything right and still not beat us.

Losing is different than getting beat. Let me explain losing this way. If I am supposed to take care of C-gap and I am not in position to take care of C-gap, that is losing. Losing is playing two-cover when we are supposed to be playing three-cover. Losing is jumping offside. Losing is holding. Losing is not knowing your assignment. Losing is based on a mental error. Under Coach Hayes, it was bad enough to get beat, but you sure did not want to lose!

I had realized this even clear back as a high school player. My parents used to say that I would come home after some games and not do anything. I figured when we got beat by Oklahoma City, they were good. They had guys that went on to the pros. But if we lost to someone inferior, if we beat ourselves, I would move furniture around when I came home. My parents said I would stew. I would do this, I would do that. I had a hard time losing. I still have a hard time with losing, but I can admit when you beat me. And this is one thing that was reinforced under Coach Hayes. I had been at Columbus only two games when we lost a big one.

Leaving It on the Turf: On September 24, 1977, I was coaching just my third game as a Buckeye. We had already beaten the Miami Hurricanes and Minnesota when the Oklahoma Sooners came rolling into Columbus. Oklahoma was ranked third and Ohio State fourth in the national poll. It was the first ever meeting between the two storied programs, one of those "games of my life," and I had barely arrived.

I had just come from the Big Eight, and Woody asked me a lot of questions about Oklahoma, because the Oklahoma-Nebraska rivalry was "the game" in the Big Eight. Oklahoma was coming up and Woody was pumping me for everything I knew. I think maybe that was one of the reasons he hired me. The defensive people were questioning me all the time. I told Esco Sarkkinen about the Wishbone and all that Oklahoma could do from that. Our coaches thought that by the third game, our defense would really be able to defend the bone.

"Hey," I said, "you haven't really seen the speed these guys have. They have Thomas Lott, Kenny King, Elvis Peacock, and Billy Sims. Billy Sims, I think, is going to win the Heisman this year. They are averaging 315 yards a game rushing, and they've won national championships two of the last three years.

"Sark," I continued, "you have never seen guys like this come around the corner. They are speed merchants. You cannot get a scout squad to simulate the Wishbone like Oklahoma runs it. You can't show your defense how they do it. They have so much speed, and Thomas Lott is one of the best QBs around."

The Buckeyes were not chopped liver, either. We had Rod Gerald at QB, Ron Springs and Jeff Logan at running backs, Chris Ward and Joe Robinson at tackle, Jimmy Moore at tight end. Over on defense were Aaron Brown, Dave Adkins, Ray Griffin, and Tom Cousineau. Freshmen that lettered on that team included Todd Bell, Al Washington, Doug Donley, Cal Murray, and Ray Ellis. Nineteen Buckeyes from that '77 team would eventually be drafted by the NFL. Both teams were loaded.

It was a nationally televised game, back when you didn't get very many of those. Keith Jackson, the legend of ABC Sports, did the play by play in front of 88,000, then the largest crowd ever to watch a game in Ohio Stadium. The game was that big. There was a stiff south wind when the game started, yet little did we know how much it would later affect the outcome. On the fifth play of the game, Oklahoma fumbled. An Ohio State player accidentally kicked the ball and it bounced right up the chest of Elvis Peacock, who streaked thirty-three yards for the first score. Four minutes into the game, they knocked out Tom Cousineau with a shoulder separation. The very next play, Sims dashed fifteen yards for the second touchdown. Four minutes in and we were down 14-0. When I was at Nebraska, Elvis Peacock scored in the last few seconds to beat us. I watched this game unfolding and stood there thinking, "No. Oh no. No. No. No, it's not happening again! Why don't we give this guy a diploma? Get him out of here."

It got worse as Uwe von Schamann added two field goals for the Sooners. The score was 20-0, and we had yet to make a single first down! Oklahoma was manhandling our line and their backs were running at will. They had scored the first four times they had the ball. It was so bad that ABC left our game around five minutes into the second quarter and switched to the Maryland-Penn State game. They left our game! Took it off the air! It was probably the first time that television ever left an Ohio State game in the middle of a broadcast.

It serves them right. In the second and third quarters, we roared back to score twenty-eight unanswered points. We had 88,000 in the Horseshoe that day, and as we clawed our way back, that stadium shook. The concrete in that place quivered like an earthquake. Ron Springs ran one in from thirty yards out. Dave Adkins recovered a Sooner fumble and Rod Gerald took it to the house on first down. We drove fifty-two yards and our freshman Joel Payton dove over from the one. Kelton Dansler intercepted a pass and our backup quarterback fired a sixteen-yard TD pass to Jimmy Moore. Oklahoma had turned the ball over five times. Suddenly we were up 28-20. With egg on

their face, ABC came back to our game. It was the kind of game you lie on your couch and dream about when you are a kid. You lie there thinking, can I play in one of these games? That game had two all-time powerhouses going back and forth, hanging on every play, fighting for every down, going blow for blow right down to the last inch, down to the last snap. Gripping! It was just so gripping! I had never been in anything like it, and it was just my third game in Columbus.

It was one of the most physical games I ever experienced. In the third quarter we knocked out Thomas Lott, their starting quarterback. A few series later, they evened the score and knocked out our quarterback, Rod Gerald. One of the meanest, nastiest, closest games in Ohio Stadium history was finished with backup quarterbacks directing both teams. Ray Griffin had to play tailback for us when our tailback, Jeff Logan, was injured.

Late in the fourth quarter, we led 28-20, but the Sooners got the ball back on the Ohio State 43-yard line. With 6:23 to go, Oklahoma moved the ball down the field in one of the hardest fought drives you will ever see. With less than four minutes in the game, and OSU leading, Oklahoma had fourth and four at the 12-yard line. We stuffed them short of the down marker. We had them stopped! Game over. But one of our linemen had jumped offside and the Sooners had new life. It was first and goal at the seven. In the first play we stuffed Peacock for almost no gain. Second play, David Overstreet went left and got a hard-fought two yards. In the third play Dean Bevins tried off tackle and got barely a yard. Again we had them at fourth and goal. This time Peacock took a pitch and somehow managed to get into the end zone. It was 28-26, but we still led. With 1:29 left to play, they were within two and lined up for the conversion. Of course, they went for two.

I have been in some loud places in my career, but no place was louder than the Horseshoe when the Sooners attempted that two-point conversion. The roar was unbelievable. Again Barry Switzer ran them right, with reserve QB Dean Blevins pitching the Wishbone option to Elvis Peacock. Our defense smothered him. Paul Ross hit him high, Mike Guess got him low, and we stopped him just short of the goal line to preserve the lead. The crowd went wild. They just went wild. With little more than a minute to go, we were getting the ball and had a two-point lead. The fans were celebrating. Prematurely, it turned out.

Everyone in the stadium knew what Oklahoma was going to try to do. We knew it was coming. We knew what they were going to do, and they did it. Unbelievably, the ball bounced off one of our player's hands, and they recovered their onside kick! We knew it was coming, yet they got it.

They had the ball at the 50-yard line. Still, there was only about a minute left. But they were driving, driving down the field, driving, driving, boom, boom. Finally, we got a stop. With three seconds left on the clock, they were still forty-one yards from the uprights and they were going to try to kick a field goal to win the game. They lined up with that stiff wind I mentioned earlier at their back, blowing right towards those north goal posts in that closed end of the Horseshoe. I realized then how that wind had affected this game. There had been 51 total points scored to that point, and 48 had been into the north endzone.

We called time to ice the kicker, Uwe von Schamann. Dang if that guy didn't just stand out there and wave his arms to the crowd. I remember him coming over towards our bench and waving his arms to the crowd to get them to boo. Then he turned around and went over to the other side. That kicker did the same thing to the east side. The crowd was in a frenzy. They were hollering, in a roar like none I had ever heard, when the referee blew the whistle to put that ball in play. All that changed three seconds later. You could hear a pin drop when the ball sailed dead center over the crossbar with no time left on the stadium clock.

I remember looking out on the field and seeing our defensive players just collapse. They just fell down. That kick sucked every molecule of oxygen right out of that massive stadium, sucked every ounce of life out of our spent players. Our guys just lay there motionless on the turf. The crowd stood, just stunned. They didn't leave. They just stood there. Stunned! Bewildered! Shocked! They couldn't believe we could get 28 unanswered points and lose that game. Eighty-eight thousand people just stood there!

It was something. Barry Switzer said it was the most exciting game he ever coached, and he had been in some dandies. The only thing that will keep me from saying it was the greatest game I was ever in is that we didn't end up on the left-hand side of the page. We lost. My greatest game is always going to be a winner.

Woody, of course, didn't take losing too well. But in that game he felt like we played as hard as we could play, and just didn't get the job done. The game lasted too long. I kept telling people, if it had just gone fifty-nine minutes, we would have won this game. Of course, as my father used to tell me, "You knew when you started the game was going to last sixty minutes."

It was quite a game, and a personal one for me. Up to this point, I had never been on a team that had beaten an Oklahoma team, other than when Nebraska beat Oklahoma State. In high school we went out there, but Lincoln High couldn't beat Oklahoma City, we couldn't beat Muskogee. When I was at Nebraska, we couldn't beat the Oklahoma Sooners, either. Nebraska beat them before I came, and after I left, but in the five years I was there, we never beat them. And then there I was in Ohio Stadium. Two points and three seconds from a win. Just two points. Just three seconds. Once again, it slipped away!

It wasn't until September 17, 1983, when we would go into Norman, Oklahoma to take on the second-ranked Sooners, that I would get a chance to exact my revenge. I was determined that day that my guys were going to play well. I'll tell you later how we did.

Woody the Person: Woody Hayes and my dad both played a huge role in my life, and they had some things in common. Woody was a lot like my father, except Dad's fuse wasn't as short! Woody was strong-minded. What Woody believed in, he believed in. You were not going to convince him otherwise. Dad was like that too. Woody believed in hard work. He seemed to like to admit he wasn't the smartest guy, but there wasn't anyone who could roll up their sleeves and outwork him. My father felt like that too. One time Woody was speaking in Kansas City, and he asked me where Dad lived.

Woody went over and saw him while he was out there. How many people would have taken time to do that? That was Woody. Both Woody and my dad were very loyal and family-oriented. Woody talked about his dad and brother a lot. He talked about his sister, who was a singer. My dad was always saying, "You are a Myles, you are a Myles."

There were two huge differences. My father didn't use profanity. Of course, we all know Woody did. Dad was competitive too, and he wasn't one to back off if it was going to come to that, but I never did see my father fight anybody. In his day, Woody punched more than one person, of course.

My dad emphasized education, and Woody did too. It was another thing they had in common. Dad's favorite saying was, "A man without an education is heading for a bad situation." Woody believed that too. You would expect that of a man whose father was a school superintendent.

Woody had commanded the destroyer-escort *USS Rinehart* in both the Atlantic and Pacific theatres of WWII. He thought like a general. If you made this little mistake, you could lose a life here, a ship there. That was his thought process and how he approached his football strategy. Football was a matter of life and death to Woody Hayes. Woody thought a coach had to be in the foxhole with his guys and wouldn't ask anybody to do anything that he wouldn't do. That is one of the reasons I really respected the guy. I think Woody would have even taken a physical beating himself, if the guy doing it was his own coach. Woody would have taken his own beating, just like he gave his players. I didn't think that was good, and didn't agree with him, when he would go around hitting people. But Woody wasn't doing anything he wouldn't have endured himself.

Woody the Boxer: I can understand why Woody hit people the way he did. He grew up that way in Newcomerstown, Ohio. Woody was a boxer. In *A Fire to Win,* John Lombardo writes about Woody describing how his combative nature came from his mother's side of the family. Lombardo writes that Woody purportedly said, "Her brother had been that way. They were prize fighters and oil well drillers, and they were really tough."

Lombardo tells that on Sunday mornings, the Hayes brothers "would clear out the parlor room furniture to make a boxing ring where they would slug it out until the rest of the family returned from the services." He explained that later Woody and his brother set up a boxing ring in a barn, taking on all comers, and fighting for the thrill of it and fighting for spending money. When they were in high school, and couldn't find anyone to fight in their weight class, they would beat up on each other. People of the town would pay to come see Woody and his brother fight each other. Amazing!

Woody was a boxer. I have mentioned I was also a bit of a boxer in my younger days. It was something we had in common. Woody and I both came up at a time when men protected themselves with their fists, not a 9 mm; but even though we had that common upbringing, we took different paths. I left my fists back at Bubble Klice's gym. Woody never did. One day Woody was walking around the practice field. Things were not going well and he was punching players. I used to tell my players, "Don't let him punch you. If he punches you and you don't do anything, he's going to punch you forever.

It's kind of like that chicken that's got his feathers plucked out. All the chickens pick on him until he fights back, then they go find another one." So my guys would knock his hands down and push him away. Woody didn't bother my guys.

One day, though, he was ranting about this and cussing about that and I doubled-up my fist behind my leg. I thought, now if this old man comes over here, I am going to deck him before he does anything to me. Woody was about ten feet away, and he said, "Bill, don't you ever roll your eyes at me that way." He was waiting. He knew I wasn't going to take any stuff off of him. One time someone asked Woody about me. Coach said, "He's a mean ole SOB." The other coaches told me later that was the greatest compliment he could ever give me. That was what Woody would say when they asked him about Bill Myles. "Bill's one mean SOB." That was a Woody Hayes compliment!

Woody was such a study in contrasts. For all the antics he did on the practice field, he was a well-educated man and away from the football environment the most polite, sweet person you could imagine. He used to read all kinds of books about people—classics, history books, biographies—and he could figure out some way to distill it down to something that would help in football. He could twist anything to fit his meaning. He would talk about why this guy thought this way, what made him, and he was a master at relating things to football.

Woody didn't talk about things he didn't know. If you got to talking about things around him and he didn't know about them, he wouldn't say anything. He might ask a couple of feel-out questions but he wouldn't say much. If you would talk about it a week later, he might ask a couple more questions. But if you talked about it again a third time—well by then he had read about it and he would school you in it. He was prepared. Woody believed in the Boy Scout motto, "Be prepared." He was.

Woody had a tremendous ego. Yet I don't think anyone who is really good at something doesn't have an ego. Tom Osborne, for example, has an ego, but he is not a person you would look at and say he has an ego. You just don't see it. It was just the way Tom carried himself, but there is something about being quiet that threatens people too. Ego is not always a bad thing. There is a difference between an "I am important" ego, and a "Be the best" ego. Ego is what drives successful people to be good at what they do. Woody Hayes and Tom Osborne both had egos, but I would call theirs an ego to do your best.

There was one time, though, when too much of an ego hurt us. We played Alabama in the 1977 Sugar Bowl, the first and only time Woody and Bear Bryant faced each other. That game grew from an Ohio State-Alabama game into a Woody-Bear game. After all, they were the top two coaches in the country at that time. When that game became Woody versus Bear, I think it hurt us. It took Woody out of his element. Normally the game was never about Woody Hayes. Woody never had the selfish ego. But this game got built up so much as Woody versus Bear that I think Woody felt pressure to do some things he normally wouldn't have done.

Bear didn't have any headphones, but Bear didn't do much coaching at the games. He just stood over there. Woody really wanted to get into that

game and so he took off his headphones too, just like Bear. Except on our side, Woody was calling all the plays. Of course, when he took off the headphones, Woody didn't have any help from upstairs and we were not set up to operate that way. Woody needed the phones, but Bear didn't, because all Bear's assistants were calling the shots anyway.

More than that, though, I really think we lost that game two days before the bowl game. We had scheduled an hour and twenty minutes of practice. We were so sharp out there it was unbelievable. Everything was bing, bing, bing. We were on the spot. Normally when we were that sharp, when we were hitting it like that, Woody would say, "Take it to the house." Normally he shut it down. But because it had become a big game, because it had become Woody versus Bear, we had scheduled an hour and twenty minutes, and we stayed out that long. Our fold blocks and double teams were really hitting it, but you can only fold block so long. We lost the edge mentally that day. We never got back to that peak. We had it then and we lost it. We had it. It would have been a whole different ball game if we had played it two days before.

Woody had great discipline. At the same time, he was a contradiction in many ways. Who could think that he could jump up and down and act like he did on the sidelines, and at the same time his team on the field be as disciplined as they were. Woody said, "Buckeyes don't act like that." I couldn't act like that. Players couldn't act like that. But Woody could. It is amazing how he did it. I always believed the team reflects the personality of the head coach. What we reflected of Woody Hayes was being a great competitor. But we didn't act like he did. You had to be a competitor and he was going to find out who the competitors were. What Woody brought to the table was that he was never going to fold his tent. Woody's teams reflected that. His teams never folded their tents.

I have been asked if Woody himself saw the contradiction between the way he behaved and the discipline he expected out of his teams. I think he saw that. I think some of his not being able to control himself had to do with his sugar diabetes. And I think some of it was a show, a way for Woody to show you, *"I care this much. Do you care as much as I do? Do you care as much as I care? I have put in all these hours. I am fighting for you in everything. I have walked over to your house, I came and got you out of trouble. I did this for you. I did that for you. After all that, are you going to fold your tent on me?"* It was the idea—look how hard I am fighting. There was not much he could do to show how hard he was fighting, other than to do all of that. That was the reason why, on the field, Woody Hayes wore his competiveness on his shirtsleeves.

There wasn't anything Woody Hayes wouldn't do for his players. There wasn't anything he wouldn't do for a guy he might have just punched on the practice field. It is so ironic. You have heard all the stories about Woody doing this for this guy, helping out that guy. Those stories are all true. So are the thousands you haven't heard because Woody never wanted these things told. He didn't want the press to make it look like he was doing these things for selfish reasons. But I was there and I saw those things.

Woody the General: There were so many different sides of Woody Hayes. Some perhaps had to do with Woody being a diabetic, set him off. Some of

it might have been to get your attention as a player. And some of it might be General Patton—you know who his idol was, and of course Woody was in that military mode too. But a lot of it was obviously to get his team fired up.

After Woody exploded, he would always come back and let you know he liked you, and that we were one group with the whole world out there against us. He related everything to battlefields. "We've got to surround ourselves and go in" was his thinking. Even our goal line plays were Patton one, Patton two, Patton three. Our guys could recite them in their sleep. We were going to knock your jockstrap off when we called those plays. The fullback was going to come humming, big Pete Johnson was going to be coming at you, big Bob Ferguson was going to be coming at you, big Bob White was coming at you. John Brockington, Jim Otis, Champ Henson, those bruisers were all coming at you. Woody's fullbacks were going to be coming right over top of you, just like General Patton's troops when he turned the Third Army north in his legendary maneuver to liberate Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge. We were going to come right through you just like Patton went through the German army.

Woody was so militaristic. At Nebraska, you just came in and sat down for a team meeting. Not at Ohio State. Woody had the troops all lined up, even in the meeting rooms. If you were the first-string left tackle, you sat on the front row on the left side of the room. The second-string tackle sat in the second row, right behind the first-string. Third-string, same thing. Guards were in the row to the right of tackles. If I was second-string guard, I knew every hair on the back of the head of the first-string guard, just from sitting behind him in every meeting all season. Woody didn't have to check attendance; he just looked down the aisles. He had them all lined up!

When he was operated on one time over at University Hospital, they left a sponge in him. Woody excused the doctors. Woody's view was that the assistants didn't do their jobs. The assistants were supposed to be counting the things and accounting for that. It wasn't the doctor's fault. Woody Hayes believed in rank. Still, if you were in his camp, whether a major or a lowly private, he would do anything for you.

Woody the Husband: Woody couldn't have made it without his wife Anne. I say that because Anne Hayes gave Woody space to do his job. Without that space—room to do his job as he desired to do it—I don't think he could have been the success he was. Woody's son acknowledged that. In the prologue to *Woody Hayes: A Reflection,* by Paul Hornung, Steve Hayes wrote, "Of all the good decisions Dad made, the very best was to marry my mother, Anne Hayes."

Woody and Anne were quite a pair. Anne met Lorita and me when we came in for the interview, and she went to dinner with us at Woody's favorite place, the Jai Lai. She did most of the talking! Woody would try to say something and she would say, "Now Woody, now Woody." She was the only person I ever met who was able to shut Woody Hayes up! She was a great lady. Anne went on all the trips, but beforehand she would go to the business office and find out how much the chartered plane cost for us to go, how many people were on the plane, and then she would divide it up and write a check for

her seat. Anne was just like Woody. Woody and Anne Hayes didn't take one thing from Ohio State they didn't earn.

Anne wrote most of the checks because when Woody would write one, he never put it in the check register. He would get a check or so at a time from her if he needed to write a check. I have seen many of his checks on walls in restaurants. They would be up there, signed "Woody Hayes," and they were never cashed. The only other place I have ever seen that was in Arkansas, where I saw on the walls checks from Frank Broyles that were never cashed.

Anne would entertain the mothers of the players when they came for a visit. When Woody and Anne wooed the parents together, it was a hard duo to beat. She was great with the coaches' wives. Lorita said she was so enjoyable to be around and called her "Woody's Even Change."

Anne was the first woman, and the only woman, to win the Ohio Gold Award by the Columbus Chapter of the National Football Foundation and College Football Hall of Fame. And she was a great speaker. I imagine, like all great people, Anne had a few canned speeches. Woody was the same. You could hear him in Cincinnati, and it would be the same speech you heard in Cleveland, except the names and places would change. Up north, you would hear about the Paul Warfields and the John Hicks, whereas in Cincinnati it would be the Eddie Beamons and the Joe Lukens. When it was Western Ohio, it would be Jim Lachey, Jim Otis, Ike Kelly, and Todd Bell. It was the same speech, but he had that knack about telling it using different places wherever he was. He had it down.

Woody remembered every detail. That shouldn't be surprising, because to be an effective coach at that highest level one needs that skill. But like Coach Tressel, Woody's mind was just extraordinary. We would be going up Highway 23 past that little stone stadium at Ohio Wesleyan University, and Woody could remember a team he brought in there, how many yards they gained that day, and what the score was. "I took my team in there, and we whipped them good. We gained this many yards rushing," he would tell me. Amazingly, it was always the same number of yards. After all those years, it was always the same number of yards. Every time he had it down.

Respect: Another thing I can remember about Woody happened when we would come out of the locker room before games. We were over at Illinois. We had just come out of the dressing room and the field is down a little hill. We were standing down there, out in the open, waiting to take the field, and the people were just saying, "Boo . . . Boo . . . Boo . . ."

"Listen to them," Woody barked. "That's respect, boys. That's respect," he said. "They don't boo Northwestern. They don't boo Purdue. But they boo us!" Woody would stand there defiant, looking straight ahead with his head high, his chin square, his jaw set, and his chest out. He loved to hear them boo him. That was sweet music to Woody Hayes' ears. "Yes sir, that's respect, boys," he would say. "Now let's go out there and grind the meat."

I was with Woody for two seasons, twenty-four games, and at least seventeen or eighteen times out of those twenty-four games, the first time we got that ball, we stuck it into the end zone. We would be going down the field, boom . . . boom . . . boom, and there would be Woody saying, "They're

booing us, they're booing us; make them sit on their hands, boys." We would be going down the field. Touchdown. Touchdown. All of a sudden, they wouldn't be saying anything. You could see him walk up and down in front of the bench. "We got 'em sitting on their hands, boys," he would boast, "we got 'em sitting on those hands!"

Doughnuts and Pie: We all have our vices. One of Woody's was doughnuts. I would see him walk past the dessert table in training camp. There would be a tray of doughnuts, but Woody was on a diet. He would walk past, then turn and come back and look at those doughnuts. Everybody in the room would be looking at him because they knew what was coming! Woody would look at them like a pitiful little boy, and then he would take a step away, and then he would turn and look at them again. Finally, he would say, "Oh, hell," and shove his mouth clear full of them. He just loved doughnuts. People didn't come to see him without bringing doughnuts. The athletic director would come over, and he'd have a dozen doughnuts. John Galbreath would come to see Woody and he'd bring doughnuts. The priest would come to see Woody and he'd bring doughnuts. Everybody would bring doughnuts. There would be days when we'd have seven or eight dozen over there.

Of course, there would be days when nobody came, and nobody brought doughnuts. But that didn't matter because Woody had doughnuts hidden! He had a stash! On days we didn't get any, he'd be looking around. "Which shelf were they on?" he'd mumble to himself. Behind the books on his bookshelves would be a box of doughnuts. A box here, another one there. Who knows how long they had been there? You could drop those doughnuts on the floor, and they would bounce! He'd call in John Bozick, our equipment manager, and tell him, "John, get us a pot of coffee in here." Woody had to dip those doughnuts to soften them up. We'd be sitting there talking and Woody would be dipping those old, stale doughnuts and gobbling them down! Woody didn't ever buy doughnuts, but he sure could eat them.

If it wasn't doughnuts, it was pie. Woody loved both. We would be recruiting down at the Buckeye Hall of Fame Café (it was called the Jal Lai then), and deserts would come out. When they would bring the tray out, Woody would ask, "Coach Myles, what pie you going to get?"

"I'm on a diet," I would say.

"Take this cherry," Woody would say, "this cherry pie is a good one." He'd put the cherry pie on my plate. I would say I was on a diet and Woody would pick out a piece of pie for me. The parent would say something and Woody would say to the dad, "This Key lime here is just the greatest. Try this Key lime." He would give the guy a piece of Key lime. And then he would go on about the raisin, how you couldn't get raisin pie as good as this anywhere. And he'd give the mother the raisin. When he got done, he would have everybody at the table with all these different desserts! Then it would come round to him and he would tell the waiter, "I don't need any, I'm on a diet." He had given everybody pie but himself!

By now, we were all sitting there eating our pie, and Woody would be looking at everybody enjoying it. Of course, his mouth would start watering and then his eyes would get big. You could see it building. Pretty soon,

swoop went his fork. Woody would say, "Hm, this raisin is pretty good." Then swoosh, it would be the Key lime. "Wow, this Key lime is really good." By the time he was done, he had eaten off everybody's pie. These people would all go home and tell their friends, "Woody Hayes ate off my plate!"

Of course, the next morning he would be in the office telling everyone, "You know, we were there last night, and Bill, he ate all the cherry pie he could get."

Well, I hadn't eaten a bite. So I would say, "Coach, you took some of their pie."

"Now Bill, did you see me do that?" he would come back. "I didn't do anything like that. All I did was tell you what pie was good." I always figured Woody didn't know which piece he wanted, so he took a bite off everybody's.

Another time I can remember driving back from Toledo or Michigan, coming down I-75 one night, and he wanted me to turn off the interstate and go west on this highway. It was going on nine or ten at night and I said, "Coach, we're going home."

"No," he said, "there's this little place down here, about five minutes down the road. They've got the best cherry pie you have ever seen in life." Well, the place wasn't five minutes from there. It turned out to be Balyeat's Coffee Shop in Van Wert, Ohio! Van Wert is thirty-five miles from Interstate 75. The place was ten miles from the Indiana border! We got over there and this nice lady fixed us a piece of pie. I do admit it was good pie. That shop's still there today, still known for that pie. But this was nine or ten at night, we were two hours from home, and we had driven thirty-five miles to get that piece of pie. I ask you, have you ever had a piece of pie worth thirty-five miles at ten o'clock at night?

When we were done eating, Coach said, "You got any money?" Of course, you knew as an assistant coach that you were always the guy with the money when you were recruiting. Coach Hayes didn't fill out that kind of paperwork when he got back. This little lady charged us about $5, or $2.50 a slice. Woody said, "Give her a ten. She's a dandy, dandy lady. She's a real nice lady. Did you see how she helped us? She's real good. Give her an extra five." Naturally, that extra five was your money you were giving her.

We headed back, and I took Woody to his house and dropped him off. By then it was about 12:30 or 1 o'clock in the morning, all because we had driven all the way to Indiana for a piece of pie. Next morning, Woody came in and said, "Bill, I owe you something," and he gave me a ten-dollar bill. Dandy, dandy pie. I mean, you could get him with pie. Woody knew all those great pie places all over the state. It wasn't just me. He had done that with the other coaches, too. He did that all over the state. Any of the coaches will tell you that he knew where all the pie places were. "They've got a dandy, dandy pie, Bill." And every waitress was a dandy, dandy person.

Water & Buses: We practiced in Ohio Stadium all the time under Coach Hayes because the artificial turf on the practice field over at the Biggs (as it was known then) was bad turf. It was the old, hard kind and Woody said it would hurt his guys. In addition to coaching his position, Woody gave every coach another job, too. I was designated "the bus coach" and my job was

to get the buses there on time. But I also had the job of getting the artificial field over in the stadium watered. For some strange reason, buses and watering went together.

I knew what time practice was going to start and what time we were leaving for the stadium. Before I took over, the previous coaches had the buses ready fifteen minutes ahead of time. Not me. I had them there forty-five minutes early! The people in the business office said that when I was bus coach, we had the highest bus bill ever. Well, the last thing Bill Myles was going to do was to have Woody Hayes standing there waiting for a bus. Every morning I'd find out what time we were going to practice and then call the bus company. I called them every single day. The bus company and I had it figured out. We made sure we never gave the old man a reason to erupt because the buses were not there. One day Woody's meeting was shorter than usual. We got out early and Coach came over and said, "Bill, if those damn buses were here we could go down to the Stadium."

I said, "Coach, the buses are out there. They're waiting. They're ready."

"Damn!" he said. He was angry. He had to find something else to gripe about because we were not going to leave until the regular time, regardless of what he said to me. He was mad the buses were there, and he had to find something else because he couldn't complain about my buses.

You didn't just ride the bus over to Ohio Stadium, either. You rode in groups. The offense rode as a group, and Woody would always ride with the offense and stand up there in front of the bus. One day on the way back from practice he said, "Rod, get up here in front." Rod Gerald, our quarterback, sauntered up there. "All right, Rod, let's go with the signal," Woody barked.

Rod would simulate calling the play. "Red twenty-three, green twenty-four, hut one, hut two, clap!" Everybody had to clap on the count! Woody would stand up there, cock his head, and listen to see if it was one clap, in sync, like one note from a symphony of instruments.

"Hmm, somebody's a little off," he would say, and we would do it again. We were practicing on the way over, and on the way back we were still practicing. Practicing clapping. I mean we had just finished two hours of drills and hard hitting, and here the guys were practicing clapping on the way back to the showers. Imagine how that went over.

As I said, buses and watering went together, so another one of my jobs was to have the field watered. If it was dry, the AstroTurf grabbed your cleats when you stopped, and you could twist your ankles or hurt your knees. When Woody was visiting the University of Washington, Jim Owens, their coach, would water his field. It rained in Seattle a lot, but he watered it anyway. When he told Woody that it helped prevent injuries, we began watering our field; it did cut down our injuries.

When we would arrive at the Stadium, as soon as I could get off the bus, I would kick the turf to see if water was oozing out. I knew Woody was going to do that too; I knew he wanted to see that water oozing. One day we arrived, and one of the groundskeepers was standing out there watering the field. He was not done. There had been a mix-up or something, and he was still standing out there, with his back to us, watering the field. Pssst. Pssst. Pssst. He was standing there spraying that big hose back and forth, watering

the field down. Well, Woody started hollering at the guy's back and cussing him out. I ran over and hollered, "Coach, Coach, the guy's a deaf-mute." The gentleman was hearing-impaired so I didn't want Woody to embarrass the guy or himself. "I know it!" Woody snapped back. Well, he did know it, but it was obvious he had forgotten that day. He was standing there hollering at the poor guy's back, yet the groundskeeper was oblivious of anyone around. Woody was working him over with some pretty salty language, and the guy was just standing there spraying that hose back and forth, oblivious we were behind him.

About that time, the guy turned around with that big hose still going, and the stream of water nailed Coach Hayes right square in the chest! Woody went sliding along on the turf. Everyone was standing there, biting their lips until it hurt. We were all trying to stay stoic on the outside, but busting our guts laughing on the inside. George Chaump leaned over to me and whispered, "I wish I was a deaf-mute sometimes."

Of course, Mike Dolan, the stadium manager, saw it all and knew he was going to endure the wrath of Woody. Mike came over and whispered to me, "I'm going to stick around because I know he is going to fuss at me when the practice is over." Mike was going to take the lumps so someone else didn't. Right on cue, Mike was there, standing on the sideline when practice was over. Sure enough, as Woody was walking off the field, when he passed Dolan, he turned and barked at him, "Get someone who can hear to water that field." Then Woody turned around and just kept on going.

Before game days, it was also the bus coach's job to call the visiting team ahead and ask if we could water our field in the Stadium on Saturday. By NCAA rules, we had to get permission before we could do that. Well, these other coaches didn't believe in this stuff. Most of them would say go ahead and water it when I called them. I would explain the reason to them, and they would say, "Well, okay, if you insist, if you have to, go ahead and water it." You could just feel their eyeballs rolling. They thought it was some kind of strategy. It was hard for me to call the coaches of the visiting team and ask, "Can we water the field?" That was my job, though, and I had to do it. I had to keep that field wet.

One week, the Baylor Coach said, "No. We're not going to water it. You can't water the field." I tried to explain but to no avail. That Saturday, during the game, a Baylor player caught a kickoff (or maybe it was a punt) in the north end zone and started up the middle of the field. He cut to the west sideline, and then got ready to cut back into the middle, and as he cut—bam, his leg went out from under him and he just collapsed right in front of our bench. The poor kid tore up his knee. Woody mumbled to himself, "And his coach wouldn't let us water the field." It was the field that did get him, though, because no one tackled him. "Your coach caused that one, son," I remember Woody saying on our sidelines. "Your coach caused that one."

I Like You: Woody was more hands on than any head coach I have ever been around. Devaney knew all of his players, and he would talk to them, but he didn't socialize with them like Woody. Tom Osborne knew all of his players, knew their problems, knew who was in trouble and who was doing well,

but you didn't see him socialize with the players. Earle knew his players, but he didn't go one on one unless there was a cause.

Woody was different than all the others in how he socialized with the players. At Ohio State, the coaches would shower with the players because we didn't have a separate shower for the coaches. At Nebraska and other places, the coaches had a different locker room, different shower. Not Woody. We used the team shower. Woody wanted it that way. It sent the message that we're equals, we're in the trenches with you. Woody had this thing about washing a guy's back. Woody might have been on you all day, and when you get in the shower he would say, "Hey Phil, scrub my back." Woody would turn around, and you would see all these guys doubling up their fist, they wanted to hit him so bad. But you know what? The next thing you knew, you would see Phil washing Woody's back. Phil would finish and then Woody would say, "Turn around." Of course, since you had scrubbed Woody's back, he was obliged to return the favor. So then you would see Woody scrubbing Phil's back, the same Phil he had ridden all practice! It was deliberate. It wasn't about a clean back; it was the message. The message was, I have been riding you, Phil, but I still care about you enough to wash your back.

There was more. After Woody would scrub the guy's back he would go to the training table, where he would talk to that same guy again, maybe even sit beside him. He had been hard with that guy all day—real hard—and that guy wanted to hit him upside of the head so bad, but there Woody was telling that guy, "Phil, I'm not angry with you. I like you, Phil. But stop holding. If you stop holding, we're going to be real good buddies. I like you, Phil, but I don't like your action. Your action is to hold people. When you get that squared away, we're going to be just like this." And he would hold his hand up and cross his two fingers tighter than tight, telling that guy he had just ridden all day, "We're going to be just tighter than tight."

That was the thing with Coach Hayes, though: you always thought he liked you. Woody would always tell you, "I like you. I don't like you holding. When you stop holding, we're going to be all right, because I like you, Phil. But you're holding. Three 15-yard penalties equals half the football field. When you correct that, we're going to be all right, Phil, because I like you. I like you Joe, but I don't like you jumping off sides. I like you Bill, but I don't like you fumbling the ball." I can remember him telling guys, "I like you, but when you stop holding, I'm going to like you better."

The mental gamesmanship continued. The next day that poor Phil would come to practice. He might be playing guard, and he practiced just about the same way he practiced the day before, but this was later in the week, and Woody would say, "Oh, Phil, that's the greatest play I've ever seen. Why, Jim Parker didn't block that play as good as that. Jim Parker didn't make blocks like that. We've never had anyone block that play that good." He had that kid going, telling him he was blocking better than Jim Parker. Of course, I was standing there thinking to myself, "Jim Parker? All-American? All-Pro? Pro Football Hall of Fame? Outland Winner? That Jim Parker? Jim Parker didn't block this play as good as this kid is doing? We've never in the history of Ohio State had a kid block this play like that? Not even Jim Parker?" But Woody had the kid going and he would do that with a kid to get into his head. By

the time he was done, he had the kid believing he was blocking better than Jim Parker.

On Mondays and Tuesdays, you couldn't do anything right. Nobody could. Not players. Not coaches. Not even managers. Nobody could do anything right. Wednesday he'd start getting a little easier. Thursday everybody was better. By Friday, though, we never had people practice like we did on Friday! According to Woody, we never had a halfback hit the hole like that. I was thinking, "Janowicz, Cassidy, Archie? Those guys ran on this practice field and we never had a halfback run like that?" There were no pads on Fridays, nothing on, but boy, the guys were really ripping it then. He was building them up like you couldn't believe. "We've never had a halfback like that. Archie never hit the hole like that. Jim Parker never blocked like that."

I would just stand there and think, "Oh man, shoot, we've never had a guard like that, we've never had a lineman like that? Wasn't Jim Parker here? Wasn't Chris Ward here? Wasn't John Hicks here, didn't he win both major awards? And we've never had a guy play tackle like this guy's playing it?" Woody had them going, though. That was how he would get them ready for Saturday. That was his way of doing it.

Woody was the best I ever saw on Thursdays. He would have a coaches' meeting and then he would talk to the team. In the meeting, he would ask me about one of my players. He'd ask me, "How is Chris Ward doing?"

"Chris is doing fine, Coach," I would answer. "He might still have a little problem, but he's a lot better at hitting that tackle and bouncing off to the second level and getting that linebacker." Woody would write that down.

He would get into his speech that afternoon before practice. As he was talking to the guys, he would say, "Chris, you've really improved over the week, you're doing this and you're doing that, but Chris, boom, you just got to get a little bit better at hitting that tackle and bouncing off to the second level and getting that linebacker. When you get that, I mean I know you're going to do that tomorrow Chris, and when you get that, wow, look out." He would smack his hands together. "Chris, you're going to be ready, 'cause Chris, we're counting on you to get up there, to bounce up there to that second level! Coach told me, Chris, if we need two yards on third and two, we just gotta come right over you! That is your play. You got it, Chris? Chris, you hear? Is that right, Chris? The coaches told me we can count on you tomorrow, Chris."

"Yes, Coach."

Of course, Chris wouldn't know that I told Woody this. Then Woody would tell somebody else. He would tell Cousineau something that he was not doing over there at linebacker. After that, it was Todd Bell in the secondary. These guys were stars, and Woody had something they could improve on. By the time he was done, he was coaching everybody.

Then on Friday, we would go out there and practice and everything was perfect. You couldn't do wrong on Friday. I mean, what he was hollering at on Monday he would just let go on Friday. He did a good job of getting the guys ready that way.

Kawasaki Motorcycles: One Friday afternoon we came into the stadium for the walk-thru, getting ready to play Northwestern. Woody gave his pep

talk on Fridays, and I was wondering, "Now, what is he going to say about Northwestern today, because we hadn't practiced Northwestern except for the last twenty minutes. We had been practicing against Michigan all week. We were to play Northwestern and we had been practicing against Michigan!"

We ran about twenty minutes, and suddenly Woody started talking about Kawasaki motorcycles and how they were killing us, hurting us, and maiming our kids! I was wondering, *Where in heck is he going?* He hadn't asked us that morning "What is so and so doing" like he did for his normal speech with this, so I was wondering what on earth he was doing. We were playing Northwestern, we had not practiced them all week, and here was Woody starting to talk about Kawasaki motorcycles!

"Men," he said, "you know, I go over to University Hospital maybe two or three times a week and see people. Sometimes I'm in there and I see a young kid, and I'm afraid to look over there at him, because he fell off one of those damn Kawasaki motorcycles. Those damn Japanese. We're going to have to whip them again, men. We whipped them once, and we're going to have to whip them again."

We were sitting there as coaches, and all of a sudden we hated the Japanese. He was going at this like you couldn't believe! I said to myself, *Shoot, I'm a grown Christian man and I hate the Japanese right here, right now. Where do I sign up?*

He wasn't picking on our guys' techniques like he was the rest of the week. He was telling them about the Japanese, and how it hurts him to see these mangled-up people over in the hospital. Of course, Woody really didn't have anything against the Japanese. He just needed someone to fight and that day it was the Japanese. He was going to get the guys ready. The next week we would fight someone different. But that day it just happened to be the Japanese. The players came in there expecting to talk about what we had to do and all of a sudden he was talking about Kawasaki motorcycles breaking our boys' arms and legs and skinning us up. He had his finger out, pointing it right at them and poking their chests. "We whipped them once and we're going to have to do it again, all because of those damn Kawasaki motorcycles!" It must have worked. The next day we went up to Northwestern and beat them 63-20!

Study Table: Study table was a staple with Woody. We had a good little defensive end from Canton, Ohio, named Ben Lee. Ben was struggling with his classes, but he was getting better. Woody was helping him at study table and Ben was working hard. Woody was always at study table. One night when Ben was sitting over there, we could see his head nodding back and forth. Ben was asleep! Woody was coming down the line right then talking to people and I was afraid what was going to happen. We were getting prepared. But when he got to Ben, he woke up just in time. Ben looked up and saw Woody and muttered, "Amen!"

The next day, Woody brought it up in the coaches' meeting. He was deadly serious. "Men, we just gotta help that Ben Lee. He's working so hard, why, he's praying over there at the study table!" Now, Ben was asleep the whole time at study table that night and Woody thought he was praying! We

told the players about it and Ben said, heck, he was just sleeping and woke up and saw Coach, so he said, "Amen!" Woody bought it, and we laughed and laughed about that. That is one of my favorites. I always thought that was a pretty good Woody story. Ben Lee, praying at the study table. Amen.

They're Gonna Go: Woody always ran a tight ship during fall camp. We did bed checks every night and Woody had us on the lookout. He used to say to the assistants, "They're gonna go tonight. The guys are going to go tonight." The first couple of days they would be too tired, but as camp wore on, Woody would say, "They're going to go tonight."

I had first hand experience with that. One night during camp Woody was sitting down in the lobby when he asked me to go up and get Bill Jaco. I went up to his room. When I knocked on the door, Ernie Andria, Bill's roommate, opened it. The first thing he said was, "You're not supposed to come back!"

It was my night to do the bed checks. I always checked the rooms once, but then I didn't ever go back. It was kind of an understood thing between me and the players. I had already checked the room that night, but when Woody asked me to get Jaco, I had to go back. I said to Ernie, "Where's Bill? Coach wants to see him down in the lobby."

"He's out in the car waiting on me," Ernie said.

So I went down the back steps and out into the lot. There Jaco was crouching down trying to hide in the car so I wouldn't see him. I said to Bill, "Son, Coach Hayes wants to see you down in the lobby. Now I came out the back door. I'm going to let you go in the back door. But you better go in that back door and up the stairs and then back down to the lobby on the elevator, because Coach wants to see you and you were supposed to be up in your room."

Bill went up the stairs and back down the elevator. When Bill got down there to the lobby, nothing much was said. Woody just sat there and made small talk. It was nothing that couldn't have waited until practice the next day. I don't know, but I have thought all along that Woody saw Bill sneaking out. That was why he just sat there and talked to him, because I think Coach knew all the time what was going on. I think it was his way of letting Bill Jaco—and Bill Myles—know that no one was going to pull anything on Woody Hayes.

I always stayed in the dorm in fall camp during two-a-days. We would have meetings until 9:45 at night and by the time I drove home, my family would be asleep; I would have to be up for breakfast with the team and didn't see my family anyway. So I just stayed with the team. Woody and I stayed in the dorms every night, trading off on duties for curfew checks. One night when I had duty, I saw this car back up to the window of the dorm and this girl got out and climbed on the trunk of the car and scrambled into the window of the dorm room. The dorm was L shaped. After a while, I said to myself, "She ain't coming out! Now, who am I punishing, them or me?" I was going to be dead the next morning if I stayed up and waited until she left. So I gave up and went to bed.

Early the next morning, I got Glen Mason. "Hey, Mase," I said, "I gotta go down and check this room." I couldn't see the room numbers, so I went

outside and counted how many windows it was down from the lobby. Mason and I got the big old ring with all the keys, and we went down there and knocked on the door—BAM-BAM-BAM. But I didn't wait on them. I opened the door and we barged in. The kid got up and ran out of his bedroom into the common area, because he obviously didn't want me back there. I whispered to him in a hushed voice, "I saw that young lady come into your place last night. I saw her climb in from the car. You know we can't have that. Where is she? When did she leave?"

He was trying to think of some way out of his predicament. "You didn't see anyone," he lied. "You weren't here."

"I counted the windows!" I barked. "I've got the right room."

I went on back in his suite and walked around. He was sweating then. There was a bedroom in the back of the place and when I got back there, there she was all covered up with the sheet around her, all cowered in the corner. "Oh no!" I said. "Oh no!" I went in and hollered at her, "Get out. Get out!" I was teed. By now, it was early morning. I thought she would have at least left sometime in the night. She had been in there all night. "Get out," I yelled." I was teed, and I was afraid Woody was going to find out.

"I can't, I can't," she said.

"Get out," I hollered.

"I can't," she screamed, "I don't have any clothes on!"

I walked out of the room and waited for her to get her clothes on and go. Then I told the player, "This is going to cost you 200 Buckeye Reminders every morning for the rest of camp. Now if you don't like that, you can tell Coach Hayes about it. We'll go ask Coach if that's fair. Of course, he'll send you back to Pennsylvania. But if you don't think that's fair, you ask him about it. Otherwise, you can do exactly what I say. I'll be there with you every morning for those 200 Buckeye Reminders."

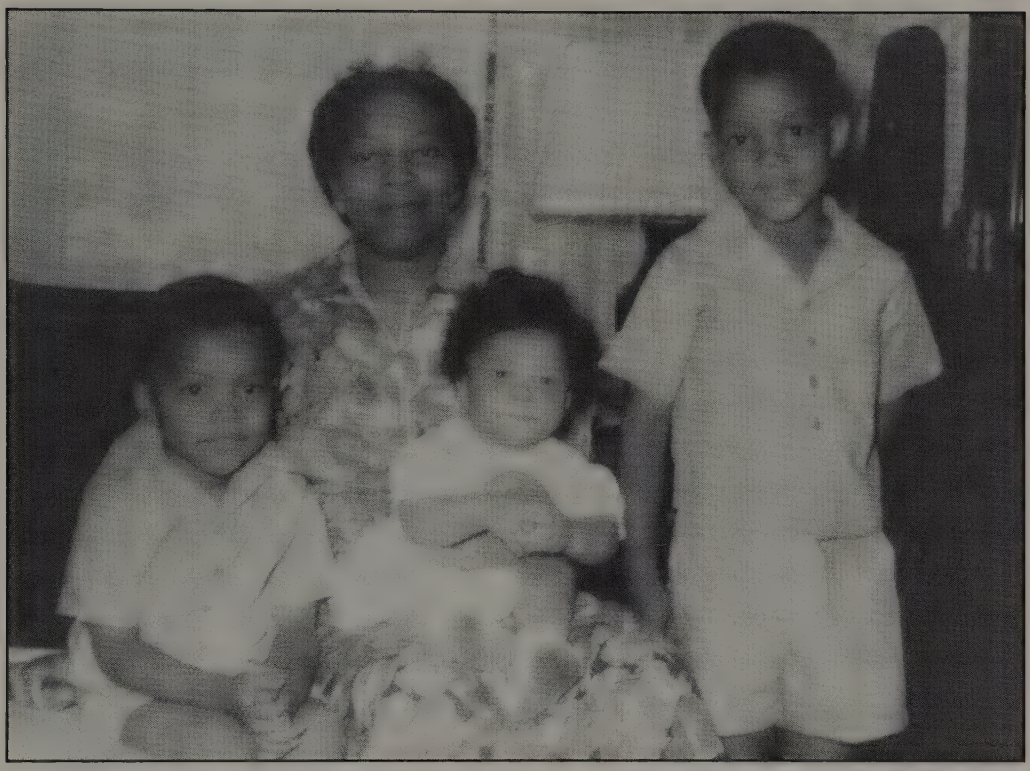
"Don't tell Coach Hayes. Don't tell Coach Hayes," he begged.

Now Buckeye Reminders are where you get on the goal line and flop on your gut three times. Then you get up and run to the 5-yard line, and you jump on your gut three times. Then the ten. And the fifteen. You do that all the way down the field. He was going to go 100 yards down, and then come back—200 yards of Buckeye Reminders. He was going to do that every morning, after practice when he was good and tired. I knew the whole practice he was going to be thinking about those Buckeye Reminders that would be waiting for him while everyone else was in the showers.

Well, that guy did those Buckeye Reminders for a couple of mornings, and the next morning Coach Hayes came walking by. Woody turned and watched him, going up and down the field. Finally, Woody walked over to the kid, looked him in the eye, cocked his head and said, "Must have done something awful bad! You didn't come to me griping about it."

Coach Hayes never asked me and I never told.

Youth Years



Mother, Vera Myles, with the Myles boys in 1942. Left to right, John, Phil, and Bill (Myles Family Photo)

Bill Myles about 8 years

The First Negro Team in the American Legion Junior Baseball League of Kansas City, Missouri

MAGUIRE Clothiers

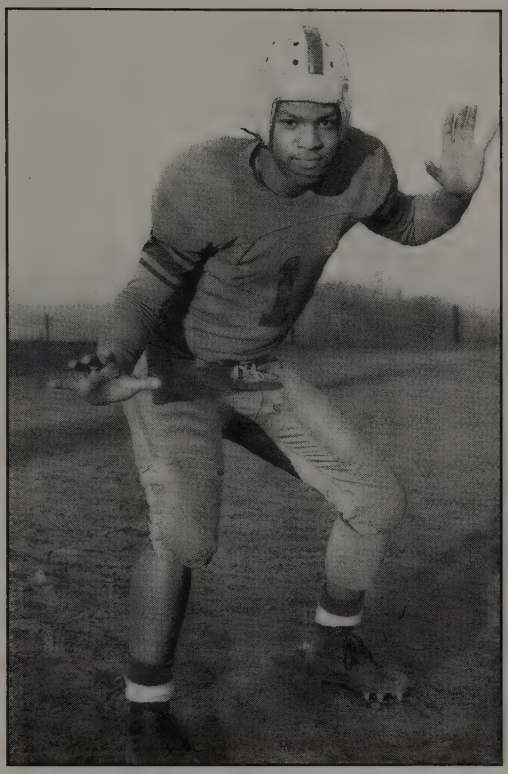
DATELINE 1952

Front row, l. to. r.: Joe Hill, James Lewis, Ruben Fielders, George Nolan and William Myles. Second row, l. to r.: Team manager Don Motley, Clydell Nave, Sidney Woods, Lee Rainey, Leroy Williams, Ralph Harris and Oliver Harris.

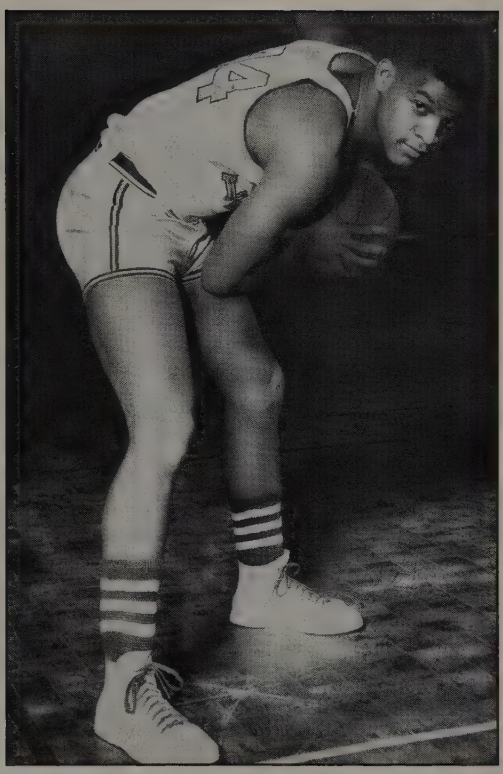
"The actions of your team and its coach on the diamond and off the diamond, in victory and in defeat, together with your own personal actions as financial sponsor for the team has earned for you, your coach and your team this our highest honor to bestow, the [Team Sportsmanship Award]."

Paul Abraham, American Legion Baseball Committee, 1953.

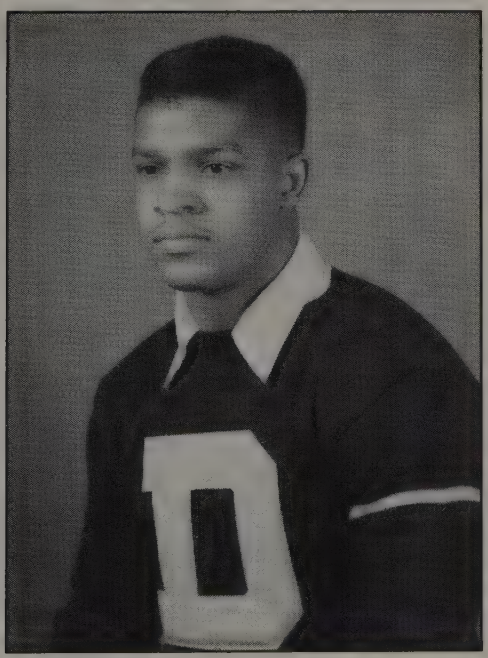
Maguire Baseball Team Advertisement and Picture. First black American Legion team. 1952 (Page and photo scan from "Coach Don Motley's Scrapbook")



Billy Myles Senior Year of Football.
Co-Captain and All-State Honors. 1953
(Bill Myles photo)



Bill as a High School Basketball Player.
(Bill Myles photo)



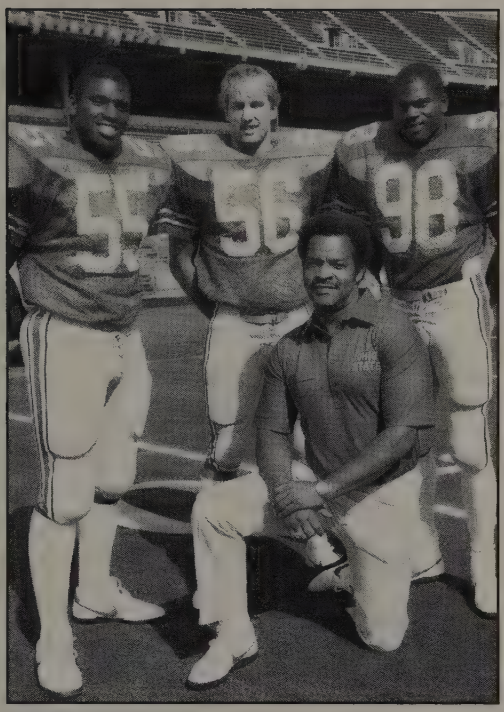
Bill in the Letter Sweater he wore "Courting Lorita." 1956
(Myles Family Photo)

Coaching Years

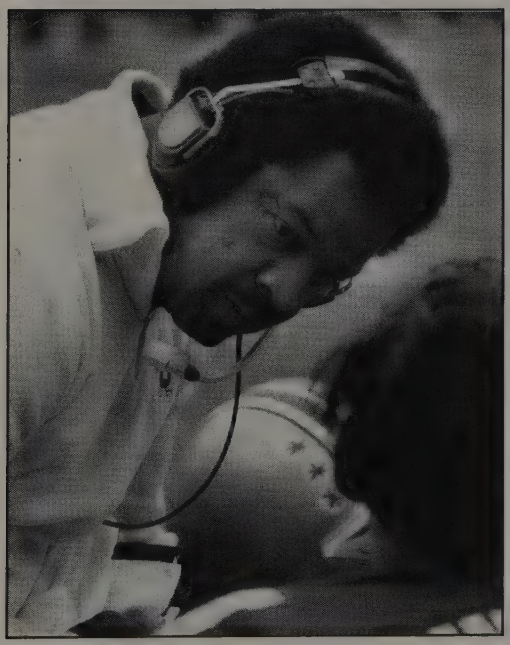
Bill Myles Lincoln High JV Basketball League Champions. 1965
(Bill Myles photo)

1971 Southeastern Knights Football Team. This is the team that started it all and sent Coach Myles to Nebraska. Team record 8 wins & 1 loss. This team outscored opponents by 239 points. (Bill Myles photo)

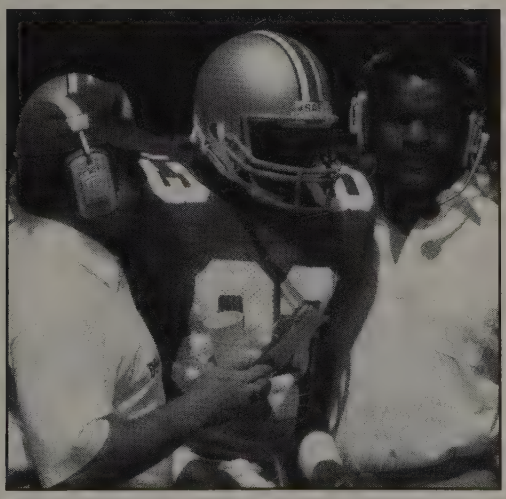
Bill and Assistant Coach Alex Gibbs on the OSU sidelines, 1977 (Ohio State University photo)



Bill Myles and the "Michigan Buckeye Recruits" he stole from that "School Up North." Left to right, Jerome Foster (#55 and team Captain), Steve Simpson (#56) and Pepper Johnson, (#98, Team Captain and All-American). Bill recruited all three of these players. (Ohio State University photo)



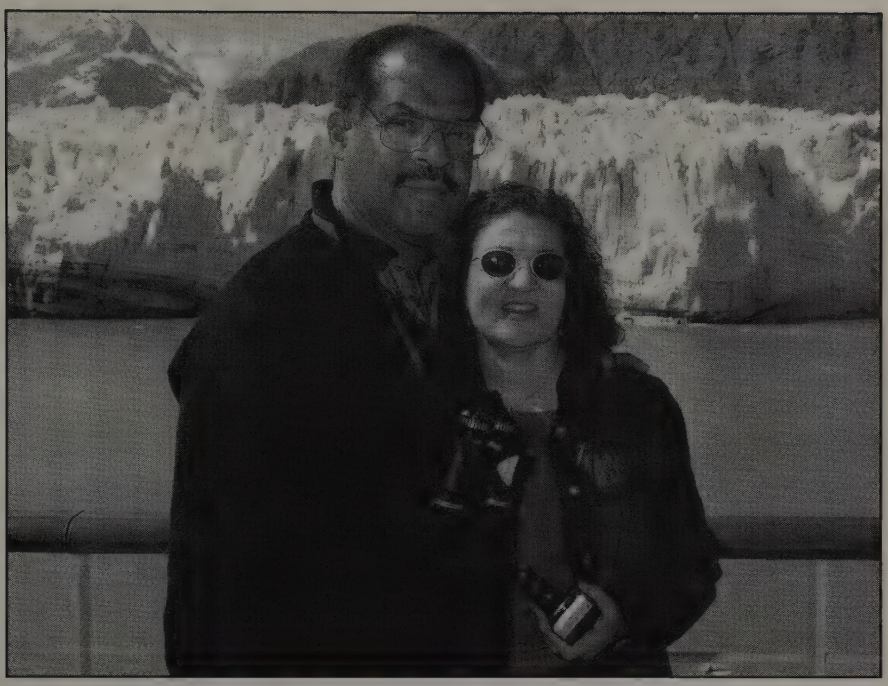
Bill with the headphones on. Coaching in Ohio Stadium. (Ohio State University photo)



Bill Myles on sideline with Coach Earl Bruce. (Ohio State University photo)

Family

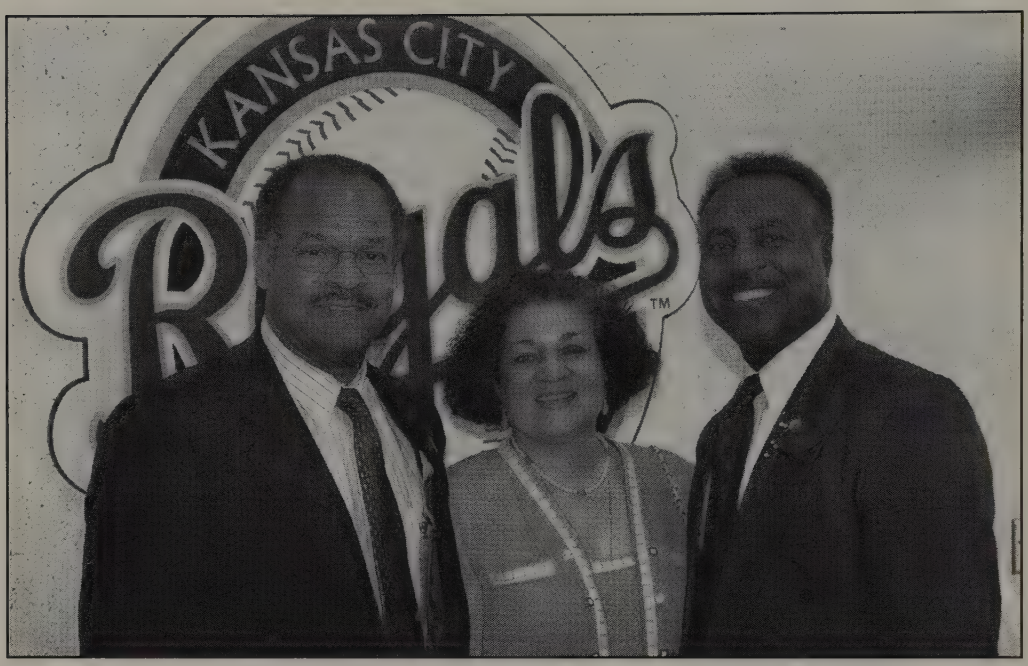
Bill Myles Family dressed in their individual college colors. 2011
(Photo by Shellee Fisher)



Bill and wife, Lorita Myles, on Alaska Cruise, 2001.
(Myles Family Photo)

Bill and Lorita Myles at 50th Wedding Anniversary Celebration in Huntington Club inside Ohio Stadium. 2007 (Myles Family Photo)

Friends



Bill, Lorita, and 8-Time Gold Glove Winner Frank White, at the dedication of Frank's Statue outside Kauffman Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri. 2004 (Myles Family Photo)

Myles with friends: Jess Rogers (chain around neck), Buck O'Neil, Mudcat Grant, Bill Myles, and Demorris Smith (Negro League Baseball Hall of Fame)

WOODY HAYES—THEY BROKE THE MOLD

ACT II—Learning from Woody

I learned more from Woody than X's and O's. Sure, Woody helped develop my style of coaching. But his influence was all encompassing. Recruiting. History lessons. Famous people. Integrity. Motivation. Woody could school you in all of those things, and he taught me.

Woody the Recruiter—Best I've Ever Seen: Woody Hayes was a great recruiter because he was the best there was "in the living room." I saw a lot of coaches in the living room, and Woody Hayes was the best closer I have ever seen. All had their different styles. John Cooper was good in the living room. Bob Devaney was more or less a folksy guy. Tom Osborne would just give them the straight facts, like a professor. Earle Bruce was very good at selling Ohio State since Earle had been both a student and an athlete there. But with Woody, it was if your son came to Columbus, Woody would be his Daddy, and Woody would take care of him, and Woody would know everything about him, and if he did anything wrong, Woody would get on him. Woody would tell them about his study table, and all the doctors and guys that got law degrees. Woody was the biggest charmer I have ever seen in the living room. He had that homey thing, and they liked him; the parents liked this little old man who knew something about everything.

The world has an image of gruff old Woody on that sideline, but when he got into the living room, he was as smooth and sweet as a prize-winning peach pie at the county fair. If you were a plumber, Woody made you think that was the greatest thing in the world. He'd see a painting, and the way he would talk about that painting, you would think he was an art critic. He would talk about a beautiful piece of furniture in your house. If he found out your son was on the honor roll, he would tell you about that.

Woody always knew who to go after to close the deal. Jack Tatum once told me that Woody never said anything to him when he visited. Jack said he was sitting in their living room, and this was the great Woody Hayes and Jack wanted to talk to him. Jack wanted to get to know him, quiz him, test him, but Jack said, "Woody never said one thing to me." When Coach left, Jack's mother told Woody, "He's coming." That was it. It was done. That was how Woody got Jack Tatum. He never even had to talk to Jack to do it. He just charmed his mother.

I recruited Northwest Ohio for the Buckeyes, so I would pick Woody up at his house. We would get up to I-270 north of Columbus and then head up Route 23. Woody would recline his seat back and say, "Bill, wake me up when

we get to the Maumee River, getting ready to cross into Toledo." So I would drive for 2.5 hours and Woody would sleep. That came easy for him with the hours he kept. When we crossed that bridge over the big wide Maumee River, on the edge of Toledo, I would wake him up. "All right," Woody would ask. "Who's going to make the decision on this kid? Is it Mom? Will it be Dad? Does he have a girlfriend? Where does his coach fit in? What does he want to be? What kind of job does his dad have? Does his Mom work? Does he have any uncles?"

You had better know all that about the situation he was walking into. Woody had to know who was going to make the decision, and that was your job as an assistant. You had better have all those answers readily available. He was asking those questions from the time we crossed the city limits until we got to the house, and when we would get there, he had it all catalogued in his brain. It was all there on the tip of his tongue, on his shirtsleeve. Now mind you, it was only fifteen minutes from the Maumee River to the kid's house, but when he went in, that was it for them.

We would get in the house, and Woody knew this family like the palm of his hand! Just from the Maumee River to the house. Fifteen minutes and he had it all. He might walk in and say, "That's a tremendous oil painting." Of course, the kid's mother had painted that picture hanging on the wall and Woody already knew she painted for a hobby. One time I told him that a boy's father was a plumber. Woody got in there, and he named some plumber's wrench! Probably the only thing in his whole life that Woody Hayes knew about plumbing was that one wrench. Of course, this dad thought Woody was the greatest thing since ice cream. I mean, he was talking about this plumber's wrench, and the guy just took off and Woody had him. He would start talking about that, or whatever it was they were into. Furniture. Books. Anything. Whatever they had in the home, Woody Hayes could talk about it!

If the television was on when we showed up, Woody walked over and turned it off. Then he would take a chair, and sit down right in front of that TV. He would say, "Now I'm only going to be here this one night. You can see the television any time. I want to find out about you, because we're very interested in you, and I want to tell you about Ohio State!"

Most people thought he was some kind of saint coming to visit them. Here he came and he would just politely put his chair in the middle of their living room. He would just sit there. The next week I would go back, and they would tell me Woody Hayes sat in that chair. The next week it would be "How's Woody?" That dang chair would be sitting in the same place he left it.

We Got Him, Didn't We? When you went to a home with Woody, people would always have cake or pie. I have told how Woody could not resist pie. One time we went to this home in Michigan. Sometimes people have pie and you think, boy, I wish they would ask me to have another piece. Other times, you know, it is hard to get just that one piece down. This time in Michigan, the mother had this pie, and it was the most terrible thing I had ever had in my life. I never tasted anything that bad. It was awful. Still, I got it down. Woody got his down too. She kept asking us if we wanted some more, if we wanted another piece! I told her, "No, I surely would love to but I can't,

Ma'am, I am on a diet." Woody said he was on a diet, too; but the lady kept at him. "Oh, Coach, you can do this, you can have another one."

Woody finally relented. "Well, yes, I guess I could take another little piece. Just a little one," he said. Woody took this little piece, and somehow he ate it too. How he ever got it down, I do not know. It was that bad. We left, and as I was driving away I turned to him, and said, "Coach, you have a cast iron stomach! That is the worst pie I have ever eaten in my life."

"Drive," he said. "Let's go, let's go. Just drive," he hollered. I gunned it.

We had just gotten out of that cul-de-sac, and turned down the main road when Woody hollered, "Stop the car, stop the car!" He opened the door, leaned out, stuck his fingers down his throat, and "AHHHHHHH!!!!!!" Woody heaved that pie up right there on the side of the road. Both pieces. When he was done, he turned to me, wiped the remnants dripping from his chin, and said with a grin, "But we got that guy, didn't we!"

The kid had signed.

Woody had told the lady that the pie was the greatest he had ever eaten, and then he went around the corner and threw it up on the side of the road. Boy, was he something in the living room.

The public persona of Woody is this man that cursed, tore up his hat, threw things, and hit people. That was the football field Woody Hayes. That was Woody the performer. That was the Mr. Hyde Woody. But there was also an off-the-field Dr. Jekyll Woody: a kind, sweet, caring man with a heart as gentle as a soft spring rain. I remember one recruiting story that illustrates the heart inside of Woody Hayes.

We were in a boy's house in Detroit. It was cold. Zero or below. The front window was broken out; there was just a sheet over the empty space where the glass had been. The family was living that way. When we went in to visit, we couldn't even stay down in the living room to talk. It was that cold. We went upstairs to the athlete's bedroom. It was so cold we couldn't sit in their living room, but his mother had still made a cake for us. She served it in the bedroom. Talk about pride.

When we got out of there, Coach Hayes went straight back to the boy's high school and arranged for someone to go and put a window in for that family. He would do things like that for people in need. It was zero outside, the family was freezing, and here was a mother trying to keep her kids warm. It was the humane thing to do. That was the kind and generous side of Woody Hayes that people do not know enough about.

Money did not mean anything to Woody Hayes. You have probably heard all the stories about Anne finding old checks, in Woody's coat pockets, that had never been cashed. I know those stories are true. People have talked about being with her when she found all of them after Woody passed.

The Guy Who Didn't Cheat: As I have said, I believe *the place you need is seeking you.* I was fortunate to be at two places—Nebraska and Ohio State—that ran clean programs at a time when not everyone in the country was doing that and when the rules were looser. Tom Osborne was a choirboy, as straight as they come, and Woody Hayes too was a stickler for playing by the rules. There was a time years ago when some schools were offering players

cars and things like that under the table. Not Tom. Not Woody. Not Earle Bruce. I am proud to have coached in those kinds of programs.

Woody had a group called the Frontliners, who at that time could legitimately help with recruiting and promote the University, go look at talent, and things like that. The group's name was later changed to Athletic Committeemen. Of course, boosters cannot have that contact at all now, but they could then. The Athletic Committeemen are a dying breed today. The late Bill Lewis was a Columbus native and one of the Athletic Committeemen. He told stories that illustrate how Woody ran the ship.

Bill was in the Small Business Administration and was promoted from Columbus to a position at headquarters in Washington, D.C. He was one of the committeemen who helped Woody recruit the East Coast. Bill told that when he first got to Washington and started visiting kids, they would ask him, "What are you going to give me?" Bill Lewis's standard answer was, "I'll give you tuition. I'll give you room and board. I'll give you books. Period." That was what was allowed, but the kids were being offered things beyond that by other schools and they wanted Bill to do the same. Bill told that after he was there a while, the word spread, and soon, when he would go into a school, they would greet him with, "Oh, yeah, you're the guy who doesn't cheat."

Woody always knew the schools that were doing the things they shouldn't. Lewis said he asked Woody one time, "Woody, how do you always know the schools that are cheating?"

"The kids tell you," was Woody's answer.

Bill told of the year the NCAA changed the rules, so that boosters could no longer buy meals and things for the kids. Over at the Fawcett Center, Woody got up in front of all the athletic committeemen and told them the new rules and things they could no longer do. When he was done, one of the guys raised his hand and asked, "But Woody, how are we going to get around these rules?"

"We aren't," was Woody's answer. "We're going to follow them!" Then he thundered, "Furthermore, if you find any other schools not following them, you tell me and I'll turn them in." According to Bill, Woody laid the law down to the group.

Bill went on to say that one of the guys in the back then stood up and said, "Yeah Woody, but what about last year? I told you what a certain school did and you didn't do anything about it."

"What school was that?" Woody asked.

"Indiana."

"Oh, hell," Woody responded. "That's Indiana. They gotta cheat."

That was the Woody I knew. He could be as funny as they come, but he ran a clean program. Despite his temper tantrums, he had a deep respect for authority. I was lucky to be at a school and working under people that didn't ask or make me do some of the over-the-line things that other schools were doing. My conscience and my upbringing wouldn't have let me do that.

A Tackle Named Lincoln: Woody was fascinated with history and he would always give the team a history lesson on our road trips. When we went to Illinois, it would be about Lincoln. I can still hear him:

> Lincoln would have made a great tackle. Lincoln was tall, lean, and Lincoln would have made a great tackle. He was a strong person, a very strong willed person, a technique type person who would stay with it. Yep. He was a great man. You know, he was born in Kentucky. He was six-foot-four or five . . .

Woody went on and on about Abraham Lincoln and how he would have made just a great tackle.

Then, when we went to Iowa, we went down to see the Hoover museum. The guide was telling us a little bit about President Hoover. Woody got up front and started telling us all these things about Herbert Hoover, and the guide just kind of slid back and stepped to the side. Woody took over and there he was, lecturing us about Hoover in the president's own museum.

"Now, you were wrong on this," he told the guide. I mean the man was a trained guide in the president's own museum, and Woody corrected him and took over. Right then and there, he gave us a whole history lecture on Herbert Hoover:

> Hoover was a Boy Scout. Hoover was an Eagle Scout. Hoover went to Stanford. Hoover's parents were Quakers. Hoover was the first president born west of the Mississippi. Hoover was the only Iowan-elected president. Hoover, Hoover, Hoover . . .

Whenever you went anywhere with Woody, you were going to get educated. We left early in the morning, we practiced, and then we had lunch. Then we would take a bus ride around wherever we were playing, and he would educate you on the history of the place.

Up in Wisconsin one time we saw this statue of a government official. Woody started talking about him. He said something to this effect:

> I don't know why they have a statue of this guy up here; he's no good. The Son-of-a Gun voted the wrong way on many issues. I don't know why these people up here have this statue of this person. They're honoring a guy who didn't know how to vote for them.

Woody was in their state, and there he was telling them who they should and should not honor.

When I was at Nebraska and then later with Earle, we would just go into the city and see the hotel and then the stadium. That was it. Not Woody, though. He would take us on a ride around the campus. We would see things. I never knew before that Indiana built their football stadium out there; the old stadium was right in the center of campus, like on our Oval at Ohio State. Woody said, "That's where we used to play football, that used to be their stadium." You could see it. It used to be a stadium and was right there in the middle of the campus. Now their stadium is on the outskirts, a good distance from the campus buildings.

Woody would take you around and show you everyone's history. In Iowa, it was, "Now that's the hotel named for the *Iowa Ironmen*, that's why they

named that hotel that." Of course, he knew that the 1939 Iowa Ironmen team was legendary as the surprise team that saved a struggling Iowa football program. He could tell you how they were picked at the bottom of the Big Ten and then went 6-1-1, beating Wisconsin, Minnesota, Purdue, and then Notre Dame. He would tell you that Nile Kinnick was on that team, that he won the Heisman in '39 and that Kinnick Stadium was named in his honor in 1972. If Woody were here today, he would talk about Nile Kinnick being named seventh of the Big Ten Icons. He would just give you a history lesson everywhere you went.

Oh, to Have Been There: I learned a lot reading Woody's books and sitting there at his knee, listening to him tell stories every morning. I loved to listen to him talk about Paul Brown and Jake Gaither, the legendary black coach at Florida A&M. Woody, Paul Brown, and Jake Gaither were together one year in summer school. They were all working on their master's degrees at Ohio State, and they were all staying in the dormitory on campus. Woody said those were some of the best discussions he ever had about football. He was getting Jake's ideas, he was getting Paul's ideas, and he was throwing in his ideas. They all agreed on certain principles, and truthfully, they were all a lot alike. Very demanding. Very organized. Very hard working.

Jake Gaither ruled Florida. If you played for Jake, he got you a job in Florida as a high school coach. If Jake offered one of your kids a scholarship and he didn't come, you no longer had a coaching job at that high school, or so I have been told. Jake was that strong in the Florida black high schools. I have listened to Jake on records and at talks. He had a deep melodic voice, like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and he would throw religious things into his pep talks. He had a good Baptist voice, like a minister. Jake could talk to the poor farm boy, and he could pray and draw it out of his players.

Gaither reminded me of John Meritt, the coach at Tennessee State who won more than eighty percent of his games during the twenty years he coached there. Meritt would ask his assistants at halftime, "Do I need to cry?" If they answered yes, John would get in there and cry. He would start telling you what you owed him. "You owe," he would tell them. "You owe me." Eldridge Dickey was a Historical Black College All-American who threw for sixty-seven touchdowns as a quarterback at Tennessee State, and was the first black quarterback ever drafted in the first round of the AFL and NFL. Dickey and my good friend James Buford were brother-in-laws, and Eldridge told stories of how Meritt would fire up his players:

> Boy, you didn't have any groceries. Your mother didn't have any groceries and I bought her some groceries that week. Your brother didn't have a coat to go to school. I bought him a coat. I bought you some shoes, boy, when you didn't have any shoes. You owes me son and I'm collecting today. You owes me. I'm collecting. So you better win.

Meritt would tell them that before the game, and then at halftime he would ask his coaches, "Do I need to cry?" If he did, he could get in there

and take it up a notch. He would cry and say he was collecting today, and then they would go out and win. They tell me Jake Gaither was a lot like John Meritt.

Of course, Paul Brown was the ultimate innovator in college football. Paul Brown brought practice schedules and timed practices to the college game. Paul Brown brought playbooks to the college game. Paul Brown brought to college and pro football the facemask, the draw play, the trap play, and messenger guards. He was the first to call plays from the sidelines and scout teams from game films. The list of what Paul Brown brought to football is endless.

So that summer on the Ohio State campus, you had three football giants together: Jake Gaither the motivator, Paul Brown the innovator, and Woody Hayes the hard working perfectionist. Woody would sometimes talk about them sitting around the dorm talking football. As a young assistant coach, when he did that I used to fantasize what it would have been like to be a fly on the wall listening to those three legends. Imagine to have been at the dinner table with them. Imagine sitting in the dorm at those late night sessions. Imagine debating strategy with them, arguing the merits of the Split T versus the Winged T, dissecting the 5-4 versus the 6-2. Whenever Woody would talk about that summer and those times, I hung on every word. The coach in me would just turn into a sponge and I would try to soak it all in. Oh, to have been there when those three were together!

Woody the Integrator: Woody Hayes made history in his own right, too. By the time I began coaching for Woody, the integration of college football was well along. Even one of the last bastions, Alabama, had been recruiting blacks for seven years. Of course, Bear Bryant was only twenty years behind Woody! Woody Hayes began recruiting blacks in 1950, his very first year at the Buckeye helm. One of his first black recruits, Bobby Watkins, would go on to become the Buckeyes' leading scorer in 1953 and 1954. It just so happens there was a guy in the same backfield with Bobby, named Howard "Hop" Cassidy, who was rumored to have been pretty fair himself. Yet Bobby Watkins led the team in scoring for two of Hop's seasons.

Bobby Watkins and Jim Parker were two of the first blacks to play for Coach Hayes. Watkins was before Parker, but they played a year or so together. I remember watching Watkins on TV when I was at Drake. He was playing for the Chicago Bears by then and he could really hit that quick hitter. Boom. He could bust it wide open. Bobby was overshadowed by Hop Cassidy, but he recently got his due when he was selected for the Ohio State Athletic Hall of Fame in 2011. Bobby Watkins was a whale of a player.

Bill Lewis often told another story about Woody and those first years that illustrates how tough it was. Woody had been invited to speak to some type of black organization that Bill was involved in, and when he concluded his remarks, Woody took some questions. One of the questions asked was, "Woody, why don't you play more black people?" The host was embarrassed, and jumped up and said, "Woody, you don't have to answer that."

"No, no," Bill recalled Woody saying. "I want to answer that. I'll answer that question the same way I answer the question when they ask me over in Upper Arlington how come I *play* so many black people. I'm going to tell you

the same thing I tell them, when they ask me why I play so many blacks. When they ask me that question, I tell them, *'I'd put a chicken in my backfield if he could score me a touchdown!'"*

Woody Hayes was a leader in civil rights long before it became commonly accepted, back in the days when a person had to have the courage to stand up for his beliefs to do that. More than one former player has said that Woody Hayes was the least prejudiced person they knew. I was told by other people—not by Woody himself, but by others who played for him—that the athletic and booster powers told Woody he couldn't have but two blacks on the field at one time. Woody told his players not to worry about that. "Just stick with me," they heard Woody say. "If you are as good as you are supposed to be, the best man will play." Woody Hayes was good to his word, and had a long list of great black football players in the '50s: Bobby Watkins, Jack Gibbs, Jim Parker, Jim Marshall, Aurealius Thomas, and Don Clark are just some of them. Of course, it wasn't just the fifties. Archie has often talked about the courage it took for Woody to start Cornelius Greene as Ohio State's first black quarterback, because Woody put Corny in the lineup in place of a returning starter and upper classman when he did that. I am proud to have been at a place that was a national leader in opening the door to athletes of color, and to have coached under the man who did that.

A Certain Group of People: Woody Hayes didn't have one bone of racial prejudice in his body; it would be twenty years before the rest of society began to catch up to him. As I have said, I was treated very well everywhere I went and by everyone I ever worked with.

Even so, there is one small incident that still today sticks in my craw. The story illustrates how far some others had to go to catch up to where Woody was. Something happened to me with another guy that never would have happened with Woody. I was in a coaches' meeting, and a guy on one of the staff—there is no need to say who or where—was talking about a "certain group of people." Of course, the "certain group of people" was code for blacks. He kept talking about them in a negative way. This "certain group of people" do this. This "certain group of people" do that. I just kind of put my head down at the meeting table, and I really had to work to keep from crying. I had to reach deep down and draw on one of my father's quotes. "Don't let a guy make you angry," Dad always said. "Don't let a guy make you angry, because he's got control of you." I had to draw on that wisdom.

I thought, "This guy doesn't know us. He doesn't know blacks." The guy kept talking about *when they say this*. I was thinking, this is what blacks call "talking at the gate." He was using *a certain group* to avoid talking about blacks. But everyone knew whom he was talking about.

He said those things in front of me and the others. To be fair to him, I don't think he realized what he was doing. I was sitting there thinking, now this guy is going to tell me these things and I have been a brother all my life. And that is how I was able to stay cool, when deep down it really hurt. But I did get upset that night. I didn't say anything in front of the others, but I told the guy privately I wanted to see him after the meeting.

We went down to an office, away from the others, and I said, "You owe me an apology."

"I don't owe you an apology," he said. "I talk about the Polish. It doesn't bother our Polish coach."

"That Polish coach laughs," I told him. "I don't. You don't see me laugh at any of this."

"No, that's true." he said. "You haven't laughed when I am talking about the Pollocks."

I said, "Nope. I haven't. You owe me an apology."

"I don't owe you anything," the guy said.

I got up, walked out, slammed the door, and left. Next day I came to practice. We didn't say anything to each other. We were dressing together, and didn't say a word. Next day, same thing.

A couple of days later, he said to me, "That really upset you, didn't it?"

I said, "It didn't bother me. I just know now how you feel. But I will tell you this. If it wasn't for that certain group of people that you keep talking about, we wouldn't be where we are in this league."

He finally apologized and said, "Well, I'm sorry you feel like that, and I didn't mean it that way."

I really don't think the guy understood what he was saying. I really think that he just couldn't understand how his behavior came across. It was probably a part of his upbringing. Even though he apologized and I accepted, it affected our relationship so that we were never the same after that. That gentleman and I are still friends today. But I think the guy realized he didn't have control over me, and that did change things in our relationship.

That is one reason I will forever admire Woody Hayes. Woody was as color blind as they come, and not just because it had become politically correct. He genuinely loved all his players as his own sons, and he treated all of them the same. Black, white, it didn't matter. He would kick your tail in practice, wash your back in the shower, and then sit down to dinner and say, "I like you Bill!"

A Speed Game: The integration of college football coincided with a change to the speed game. You look back. I tell guys Minnesota had a powerhouse team in the '30s. You go up to that indoor stadium where they used to play and look at how many national championships Minnesota won in football. They were good. Bud Wilkinson played there. That was when they had those big, strong Swedish and Norwegian players. A guy named Dwight Reed, who later coached at Lincoln University and had offered me a scholarship, was one of the only blacks on the Minnesota team in the '30's. I think there are some pictures of him with Bud Wilkinson. He was from Minnesota, and played there; in the thirties, Minnesota was ahead of the other schools as far as playing blacks. They had *one*. Just *one*, and they were ahead. Football was a power game then. It was a game of strength. You just stood up and determined who was the strongest. There was no trickery to it. The pass wasn't in, so whoever was the biggest, strongest, and toughest won the games. Of course, in Minnesota, the Swedes and Norwegians were big, strong, tough people. So they won a lot of games in the '30s.

But with the advent of the black athlete getting into major college football, they changed the game. It became a speed game. Minnesota is again an example. Later on they got the Bobby Bells, the Sandy Stephens, and those guys. I got to know Bobby Bell real well when he played with the Chiefs in Kansas City. Bobby was the fastest guy on the Kansas City team, and he played outside linebacker and defensive end. If integration had been all over the country when Bobby Bell got out of high school, he probably would have gone to the University of North Carolina, because he was from North Carolina. So would have Carl Eller. But Minnesota was a leader in getting blacks into school, so they got Bobby Bell and Carl Eller. Minnesota was first, Michigan State second, and Ohio State third as colleges began really recruiting black athletes.

It is telling how long it took to integrate college football. Minnesota had a black player in the '30s, yet Alabama, a powerhouse of college football, didn't have a single black player until 1970. The lore was that Bear Bryant got with John McKay and had Southern Cal come to play at Alabama so he could then recruit black players. The joke at the coaches' convention was, "Bear Bryant didn't bring about integration at Alabama, it was Sam Cunningham." Cunningham gained 135 yards and scored two touchdowns as USC beat Alabama 42-21 at Legion Field in Birmingham on a sultry night in September of 1970. After Sam ran roughshod over the Crimson Tide, the story went that Bear said, "Get me one of those!" At least, that is the lore.

Bear could have done that if he wanted to. And he and John McKay did work together to get that game scheduled. And Bear is reported to have invited the black USC running back into the Alabama dressing room after the game and made his players shake his hand. History shows, however, that Bear had already recruited one black: Wilbur Jackson in 1970, who was on the sideline that night that Cunningham showed Alabama how it was done. And he had two freshmen who joined the roster in 1971. So some theorize that the USC game was not planned as a revelation of what Bear wanted to do, but rather to convince the Alabama following of the wisdom of what he had already done. Nevertheless, there is agreement that it was no accident that Bear scheduled that game. The point of this story is that the integration of major college football was a more than 40-year journey, which started with the schools in the north and took a long time to reach many of the schools in the south.

Some people talk about how old school Woody was, about how he couldn't coach today's kids. You couldn't be old school and bring black players into a white team in the early fifties. I think if Woody was coaching today, or for that matter if Bear Bryant was coaching, both would adjust. They did adjust in their times. You look at all those pictures of the guys that played for them early in their careers, and they had those butch haircuts. Then you look at their later teams, with the long sideburns, the big Afros and everything. It became a different ballgame in their later careers, and they did adjust. You can't coach young men for that long of a time if you can't adjust.

Anything Wrong, Officer? Even though integration was happening, it still wasn't always smooth sailing, even in the '70s. One legendary Woody

incident took place not long before I arrived. Woody was with Mickey Jackson and they had been to New York with Archie earlier in the day, for one of the Heisman presentations. Afterwards, they were riding down the interstate, heading home; Mickey was driving and Woody reclined his seat, lay back, and went to sleep on Mickey as he always did. Of course, Mickey was a black coach, and this was in the mid '70s during the height of the trucker CB craze. The semi-drivers started telling each other on the CB radios that there was a black guy driving this car, and he evidently had killed a white guy. There was this white passenger beside the driver, and the white guy was lying out in the car. The guy wasn't moving, so apparently he had to be dead. This story was going on up and down the highway, with these guys on their radios talking to each other. These truck drivers were looking down into the car as they drove by and seeing this dead guy, and the talk going all up and down the interstate was that this black guy must have killed the white guy.

Finally, a police car drove up behind them with its lights flashing and pulled Mickey and Coach Hayes over to the side of the road. The officer cautiously approached the car—probably with his hand on his gun—leaned in, and asked Mickey for his driver's license. Well, just as he did, Coach Hayes bolted upright in the seat and asked, *"Is there a problem, Officer?"*

The startled policeman stammered, "No . . . No . . . Uh . . . No, there is not a problem. But I have been receiving calls from all these truck drivers reporting that this guy had murdered a white guy. He wasn't speeding, he wasn't doing anything, and there was this guy laid out beside him not moving."

So that is one of the great Woody Hayes stories. You should hear Mickey laugh when he tells it. I can just see Woody rising from the dead! *"Is there a problem, Officer?"*

What's Jim's Number? Woody would admit when he was wrong, but he kept you on your toes. He assigned coaches to keep track of former players; then one of his favorite tricks was to ask you about a guy, and you better know about that guy. I had each guy's phone numbers written on a card. I still carry cards to this day, just because of that. I kept the cards hidden down under the table during the coaches' meetings. Woody would call the secretary in and tell her, for example, "Call Jim Parker." Then he would ask me, "Bill, what's Jim's number?"

"124-4567," I would quickly reply, rattling off whatever Jim's number was at the time. Of course, I had nonchalantly glanced down at a card under the table. You had better know all your guys' numbers, right now. Woody expected that. The secretary would then get the guy on the phone.

Of course, sometimes the guy Woody wanted didn't answer. "How come he's not there?" Woody would ask. He used to ask me about Jim because he was one of several guys I was keeping tabs on for Woody. "How come Jim's not there?" Woody would ask me.

I wanted so badly to say, "Coach, Jim Parker is not setting there in his store in Baltimore, 421 miles away from Columbus, saying Woody Hayes is going to call me today so I better sit and wait on him!" I mean, Jim Parker was a grown man! Jim Parker had been away from Ohio State for twenty-plus years! Jim Parker was a class ahead of me. Jim had retired from Pro Football

and was running this liquor store in Baltimore, Maryland! But all of a sudden, Woody wanted to talk to Jim Parker, and he said to get Jim Parker on the phone, and he expected Parker to be sitting by the phone there in Baltimore, waiting to talk to him! It took a special person to be able to coach in the environment of Woody Hayes.

If you were a friend of Woody's, you were a friend for life. He always wanted to know about everybody, but Parker was one of his favorites. I remember one time when Jim came to a practice, Woody had him talk to the guys. He called Parker out to the middle of the field. Woody told how great Jim Parker was, Jim this and Parker that, and then Jim started talking. Well, Jim got to talking a little long that day, and Woody kept trying to stop him and move on. So Parker put out his arm and pushed Woody back. Of course, that is what Woody himself did to people when anyone tried to stop him. Woody would push you back. Now there was no way Woody Hayes was going to out-push Jim Parker. When Jim did that, he said to everyone, "I've waited twenty-five years to be able to do this!" We all roared.

Jim told me how Coach Hayes had the first team sit up on the first row in the locker room, before the game. Woody would be walking around, slapping people on the side of the head, getting people ready. Jim said he would try to sit in the back and "I'd be the only one sitting there with my helmet on. I had my helmet on because Woody was going around slapping people."

But Jim loved the "Ole Man," as Woody's former players affectionately called him. He said the Ole Man was good to him. He said there had never been anybody like Coach Hayes. Jim Parker was born in Macon, Georgia, and came to Toledo his senior year for high school football. Coach Hayes was the main speaker up at a banquet in Jim's senior year, 1953. Coach was in there talking and asking people about the players in Toledo, and some guy supposedly said, "The best player in Toledo is out there in the parking lot. He's the guy parking cars." That's the legend of how Woody met Jim Parker, but Jim himself told me that it is true. Jim came to Ohio State and of course in 1954, his sophomore season, he helped Woody win his first national championship. Jim would go on to be a two-time All-American and win the Outland Trophy. Most people know that. But few know Jim Parker finished eighth in the Heisman balloting his senior season, and that when he won the Outland in 1956, he was he first black to win that award.

Parker had so many stories to tell. Jim told me personally the story of Coach Hayes telling him that they couldn't have but two blacks on the field at once. Jim is the one who said Woody told him, "Jim, you stick with me. If a guy deserves to play, I'll get him out there." Jim said that when he left Ohio State, Woody had more than two out there. After Parker told me that, I thought about when I came to Ohio State, how far Coach Hayes had gone the other way. In 1952, the quota system was only two blacks on the field. In 1977, we had on defense ten black starters, and one guy who was white. That guy was starting as a linebacker, Tom Cousineau, and Tom was an All-American. In Woody's career, it had completely reversed itself. That was why Coach Hayes didn't take anything from anybody, but instead used that for scholarship money for children of his coaches. (My daughter Debbie received

this benefit!) Woody didn't owe anybody anything, and he could play anybody he wanted.

Woody helped Jim Parker. One time, Jim lost his rent money at a movie theatre and had to go back to Coach Hayes for help. Of course, players were not on scholarships then but were given jobs. Jim said that was one of the hardest things he had to do. But Coach Hayes believed him and gave him the money, and Jim did something to get the money back to Coach Hayes. Coach Hayes just loved Jim Parker. Jim Parker was Coach Hayes's heart.

Jim said sometimes Coach would call him up and they would have breakfast down at the Holiday Inn. He said Coach would sit there and tell him stories and stories. They would move out into the lobby, and Woody would keep telling him stories. Next thing, Woody would look at his watch and say, "Jim, we might as well have lunch!" So they would eat lunch. Jim said, "I would just sit there and listen to him talk, and sometimes I might even get dinner!"

"I listened to him," Jim said. "A lot of things made sense. I used the things he taught me later in my life." Jim said Woody would just talk, tell him how to become a man, tell him plays he wanted to do, but mainly how to run his life, whom to trust, whom not to trust. These are the things that Woody Hayes did that other coaches couldn't do or wouldn't do. Woody would have a hard time doing that now, because coaches only have so many hours they can spend with the players, but he would find a way to do it.

In 1977, I went to Baltimore to see Jim because we were getting the Ohio State Varsity O Hall of Fame together and we wanted to give him an award as the greatest lineman in the history of Ohio State Football. You realize some consider Jim the finest lineman ever to play pro football! That was how special Jim Parker was. So I went to Parker's house, and we sat in his living room talking about it. He had this All-American Award that *Look Magazine* had put out. He had trophies sitting all around his living room. We wanted Jim to come back and personally accept that Hall of Fame award. But Jim didn't want to. I was trying to talk him into it, but Jim instead told me stories about running his liquor store, and about why he wouldn't leave it.

Whatever it is—and I don't know given that I don't drink—there is a certain bottle that blacks drink more than anybody else. I don't know whether it was fifths or pints, but Parker sold more of that quantity at his store than anybody in the nation. Jim said, "Bill, I can't leave my store. When I leave, I have to have someone else at the cash register, and when I am gone, that person does this. *One for me, one for Jim. One for me. One for Jim. Oh, I gave that last one to Jim, didn't I. Another one for me.* I get back, Bill, and I look at that cash register. I look at that shelf up there, and it doesn't match up. So I just never leave." He wouldn't.

Jim Parker didn't leave to come back to Columbus after Coach Hayes died, either. You might wonder why, given that they had such a deep bond. There is a good reason. Later on, Jim was supposed to come when we were going to honor him as our Greatest All-Time Lineman. But again, Jim wouldn't come. He sent his son. I later learned that Jim Parker was afraid of flying. One of the fiercest linemen in Ohio State history was afraid of flying. The All-Pro lineman, who had faced the meanest linebackers in the NFL, in an era without facemasks, was afraid to get onto an airplane. At his funeral, the guys that Jim

had played with said he used to hold on to his seat white knuckle the whole time when he was flying with the pros. Jim just didn't want to fly. And then, too, Jim didn't feel he had any connection to Columbus after Coach Hayes died, so we couldn't get him back. But Jim Parker sure loved Coach Hayes.

Jim Parker passed on July 18, 2005. John Hicks, Aurealius Thomas, and I went to his funeral as the official representatives of Ohio State. It was fitting. Two of the greatest Ohio State linemen accompanied me to pay homage to perhaps the best ever. Woody would have been proud. I can see him up there at the Pearly Gates, welcoming Jim and looking down at us saying, "A-huh, A-huh." After all, Parker was my guy to keep tabs on, and I did it to the very end.

Big Four: One of the talks Woody gave on many occasions was the "Big Four." Woody would begin by saying he was going to talk about four of the greatest athletes in the history of sports: Jesse Owens, Jack Nicklaus, Archie Griffin, and John Havlicek. I always thought he should have said Jerry Lucas, but Woody chose Havlicek. Turns out, Woody was right as usual. Lucas was big in college, but when I looked it up in the NBA record book, John Havlicek is considered one of the best in NBA history. Only two people in NBA history have won more rings than John Havlicek, and they were Bill Russell and Sam Jones, his teammates. That is how Woody arrived at Havlicek, and those were the ones in what we assistants called the Big Four Speech.

Woody would use it in homes, in talking to recruits' parents. He would use it at banquets, talking to high school students. He would tell them, "At Ohio State we have had four of the greatest athletes who ever played in four different sports." Who could argue with that in an era when Woody was giving that speech and doing the recruiting? Who could argue with Jesse Owens, who set four world records in an hour and twenty minutes? Who could argue with someone who won four gold medals in the Olympics? Who could argue with Jack Nicklaus, maybe the greatest golfer of all time? Who could argue with the only person to hold two Heisman Trophies? Who could argue with someone who was an eight-time NBA champion? Who could argue with that? You just couldn't.

Woody and I were lovers of history, so we had something in common when we traveled. When we were together in the car, I would ask Woody about Ohio State history, because I was always interested in the history of athletics and athletes. One time I told Woody, "Coach, at one time you had one tremendous backfield. You had Tom Matte, you had Paul Warfield, you had Bob Ferguson, and you had Matt Snell. All in the same backfield. That was a great backfield, and maybe during that time—the early '60s—you had some of the greatest athletes in Ohio State history, all here at one time."

"What do you mean?" Woody asked.

"At the same time those guys were here," I told Woody, "Havlicek, Lucas, and Nowell were here in basketball. Nicklaus was still here in '61. You had the connection with all the great swimmers from Hawaii. At the same time that was happening, Glenn Davis was here in track. Just a little before we had Frank Howard in basketball and baseball. In 1965, Ohio State was one game from winning the College World Series in baseball. Arnold Chonko,

Steve Arlin, Chuck Brinkman, and Bo Rein made the All-Series team. Some of those guys were juniors and seniors then, so they would have been here in '62 and '63, too. There was just a tremendous group of athletes on campus at one time in the early '60s." And we had five nationally famous coaches here then: Woody, Fred Taylor in basketball, Larry Snyder in track, Mike Peppe in swimming, and Ron O'Brien in diving. All at one time! I don't know if we, or any school, had ever had all of that at one time. I told Woody that one day on the road.

Times and Change: On those long drives, Woody and I talked about the early days of Ohio State. We talked about Lynn St. John. What did St. John do? He was a guy most people thought was crazy. He went from a 16,000-seat stadium to an 88,000-seat stadium. He had ideas. I think Ohio State and Michigan are where they are today in athletics because of Lynn St. John at Ohio State and Fielding H. Yost at Michigan.

When you read back in history, you think about Fielding H. Yost of Michigan. Do you know, he had a chance to be the coach at Ohio State? Woody told me Yost interviewed in our faculty club over there and he was throwing chairs around, moving them around, and talking about the formations and things that he was going to use. Fielding H. Yost was almost a Buckeye. I think he didn't get the job because maybe they thought he was a wild man. I don't know that I have ever seen that anywhere else, but Woody told me the story that Yost actually interviewed. I have no reason to doubt him.

I told Woody, and I have said this to others: Ohio State is where they are today because of the foundation that L. W. St. John laid. He was the athletic director here a long time. After him, the tenure of each one got shorter! Of course, now, you couldn't go somewhere and stay that long, like in St. John's days. It is different. But St. John started as athletic director in 1912 and was in that position for thirty-five years! Not only was he athletic director, but he was the head basketball coach for seven years and baseball coach for fifteen years, and the Buckeyes joined the Big 10 (then the Western Athletic Conference) the first year St. John was here. What he did back then laid the foundation.

Some have said the black community doesn't have as much respect for Lynn St. John because they felt he didn't treat them fairly. I have heard that. But there are some things people should consider before they feel that way.

My opinion of Lynn St. John is that he was a great visionary. I have heard what he did with some of the guys, but you have to remember that St. John came here in 1912. What was that day and age? A lot of these people did what was popular at the time. You put him in the time he was. St. John and Fielding Yost from up north, they were winners. They were going to do whatever was possible.

Lynn St. John hired a Paul Brown, who brought in Bill Willis, and then took him into the NFL. St. John easily could have said, "Bill Willis, you can't play at Ohio State." Granted, Bill had to be better than everybody else, and not be a problem in any way, but St. John and Ohio State let him play. At that time, other major college football schools wouldn't do that. Not in the '40s.

Alabama wouldn't have. There were lots of them who wouldn't have, especially in the South, and elsewhere too. But St. John did.

Now, I am not saying Lynn St. John was a perfect guy. Heck, only one guy who trotted this globe was perfect, and we crucified him. You can say what you want about a guy. But you put him in his time capsule, in the early twentieth century. That is when my folks were going through the Tulsa Riots. There were still lynchings in the South. It is easy for a person to sit here today and say what a person eighty, ninety, one hundred years ago should have done. It is almost a hundred years from St. John's time to now.

As Bear Bryant at Alabama finally learned in the early '70s, when he brought USC into Tuscaloosa, if a guy can help you win, can help bring dollars into your institution, you really don't see color. You are seeing, who can help me sell my product? Who can help me be a winner? As I said, St. John or Yost, if they had been at Illinois, at Indiana, at somewhere else, those places would be winners today. St. John and Yost were just winners.

It is interesting to speculate about the bigger role sports played in Ohio State's development. How much of the fact that Ohio State is now 50,000-plus students—with a respected medical school, a highly ranked business school, an outstanding pharmacy school—is due to the notoriety of that stadium and the prominence in athletics that St. John developed in the years when the university was forming and growing? President Thompson. Thomas French. Lynn St. John. Ohio State had some progressive people at that time and look what it did. What would the university be today as an academic institution without them? Would we have still attracted benefactors like a Les Wexner or a Max Fisher?

It is not only St. John. I look at my own people. If it had not been for Martin Luther King, Jr. coming along, if it hadn't been for Booker T. Washington earlier, where would we be? Some of the younger blacks—when I was coming along in the '60s—were saying, "Booker T. Washington wasn't any good." Well, if Booker T. Washington had done what Martin Luther King, Jr. did, we would have never heard of him. Booker T. would have been lynched. It's the times. You have to put the guy in his time period.

Progress and advancement goes back to having leaders, and Ohio State and Michigan had leaders with St. John and Yost. You can see it, or a lack of, in other places. Look at Illinois football. Robert Zuppke did a good job over there during the Red Grange days. He was winning. But they have never gotten a coach like that since. Look at Nebraska. Nebraska had great teams in the '30s when they had Dana Bible there. Then they went into a deep depression because Oklahoma had a Bud Wilkinson. Nebraska fired their coach and got a Bob Devaney, who turned them into a national champion. He replaced himself with Tom Osborne, who kept the success going.

Ohio State was the "Graveyard of Coaches" when they hired Woody Hayes, and ever since then, the standard has been, if you don't win a championship, you haven't done anything. We didn't have that many championships that were won before Woody's time. You can look in the Woody Hayes building and see those years on the wall. We didn't really start putting them up there until the fifties when Woody Hayes got here. Of the Big Ten championships we've won, Woody won thirteen of them. That is one for every

other year he coached! He set a standard. Now the standard is, if you are not in the running for a national championship, you are not a good coach. We don't want you.

Ohio State has always been a leader. It is a leader in programs, a leader in facilities. And, in Woody Hayes' time, the football program was not only a leader in championships, but also a leader in developing coaches. Let me tell you a bit about the stable of thoroughbred assistants Woody Hayes attracted and cultivated.

WOODY HAYES—THEY BROKE THE MOLD

ACT III—Woody's Crazy Coaches

One night I had been recruiting in Toledo and driving home late, by myself, and I got sleepy. I did everything I could to stay awake—hollering, singing, you name it. Finally, I stopped along the side of the road, got out, and did jumping jacks. There I was doing jumping jacks on the side of Interstate 75, about twelve-thirty at night, when—wouldn't you know—a policeman pulled up behind me. I am sure the officer had not seen too many people doing jumping jacks on the side of an Interstate highway after midnight! Surprisingly, he recognized me.

"Bill Myles?" the policeman asked.

"Yeah," I answered.

"What's your problem?"

"I'm trying to stay awake," I said. "I've got to get back to Columbus. I've tried the cold air. I've been driving barefooted. I've been hollering and singing. I'm trying to stay awake."

"Another one of Woody's crazy coaches," he said, as he shook his head and climbed back in his cruiser!

Well, I might have been crazy. Might still be. But you look at the long line of head coaches who once coached for Woody Hayes, and Woody's coaches were far from crazy. Woody was a mentor. Woody put together one of the best stables of thoroughbreds in the coaching profession. At one time, I think six of the ten guys that were coaching in the Big Ten were Woody's guys. Over the years, you had Bo Schembechler at Michigan, Dave McClain at Wisconsin, Bill Mallory at Indiana, John Pont at Northwestern, Lou Holtz at Minnesota, and Earle Bruce who followed Woody. Of course, there was also Ara Parseghian and later Lou Holtz at Notre Dame.

Then there were Woody's assistants. At Ohio State, there were assistants like Alex Gibbs, Mickey Jackson, Glen Mason, and George Chaump. There was George Hill, Dave Adolph, and Gary Blackney. Of course, the all-time great was Esco Sarkkinen. These guys were great assistants, and I was so fortunate to work with them.

Woody liked coaches who started in high school. He thought everybody should coach high school ball. There was a reason. I think it hurts college coaches when they don't start on the bottom rung. In high school, you don't get to pick your players. You take what is there, and then you have to figure out, what can these young men do? You have to teach the kids many different things. Woody thought the guys who had just coached college missed this. They were not in the cafeteria. They didn't have to take a kid home after he

was injured on a Friday night. Woody thought all of these things were important to being a good coach. That was what Woody liked about me and about many of his other coaches. I think that was what he liked about Earle. Many of Woody's coaches had been very successful head coaches in high school. Those guys had figured out how to win with what they were given, not what they picked.

Woody's Thoroughbreds: It was bliss. I worked with so many great coaches under Woody that I wouldn't do justice if I didn't share with you some things about these men, our relationships, and things that helped me grow as a coach.

Alex Gibbs had been a defensive line coach, but he moved to offense right before I arrived. Alex coached guards and centers while I had tackles and tight ends. Alex was a technician who made a big name for himself as a pro coach. He was considered an offensive line guru when he coached those great lines the Denver Broncos had. Alex believed in a smaller lineman, and really went after people real low. He developed an All-American guard named Ken Fritz during the two years I coached with him. He played small guards, which we could get away with at that time, because we normally played against a "50" defense and the guards were not covered. The guys were real quick and small, so they could go get linebackers.

Mickey Jackson was the offensive backfield coach who developed Archie. Of course, Mickey is the only coach in history to have coached a two-time Heisman Trophy winner. Mickey's job was a hard one, in that Coach Hayes was in all of his meetings—and of course, Woody always wanted something to do with the fullbacks. He always wanted his finger in the offense. Mickey did a great job in spite of that hanging over him. He was a great running back coach, and I have seen a lot of them. Mickey was fortunate to be alive to coach at Ohio State. Before coming to the Buckeyes, Mickey had been a running back at Marshall University in the late '60s, half of one of the premier running tandems in the country, and a member of the Marshall University Hall of Fame. In September of 1970, Mickey returned to Marshall as backfield coach. Two months later, on a rainy and foggy night on November 14th, the plane carrying the Marshall football team home from East Carolina went down on its approach to the Huntington Airport. All seventy-five people on board were killed in a horrific, fiery crash that was later memorialized in the movie *We Are Marshall*. Mickey would have been on the plane, had he not been sent to State College that weekend to scout Ohio University, Marshall's next opponent, who was playing Penn State that day. Otherwise, Mickey would have been on that plane. Mickey was one of only three members of the Marshall team to survive—two coaches and a player—one of the three who picked up the pieces to keep the Marshall program going in the aftermath of that tragedy.

Despite being a great coach, Mickey was one of the casualties when Woody was fired. At that time, most schools had one black coach. Woody had two. Mickey was already at Ohio State when Woody brought me in. Woody tried to find jobs for all his coaches after he was fired. Mickey was one he had trouble finding something for. Some have said it was because Mickey was

black. I don't know that, but I do know it wasn't because Mickey couldn't coach. Here was a first class guy who had coached a two-time Heisman Trophy winner. Here was a guy who had coached Champ Henson, Pete Johnson, Jeff Logan, and Ron Springs. All of those guys went to the pros. It wasn't because Mickey couldn't coach running backs. When Woody couldn't find him a coaching job, he helped set Mickey up in business, set him up to learn under the tutelage of one of his former players, Billy Joe Armstrong. That was how Woody did things, even to the end. Today Mickey is a very successful Columbus businessman.

Esco Sarkkinen was one of the great all-time assistants in Ohio State history, and one of the legendary guys I was privileged to coach beside. He was the longest serving guy on the staff, predating even Woody at Ohio State. One of the great ends in Ohio State football, Esco was a consensus All-American in 1939, and he coached a heck-of-a-lot of other All-Americans while he was at Ohio State. Esco Sarkkinen was a very bright person, an honor student recognized by the Big Ten as Ohio State's Top Scholar-Athlete. He served in the armed forces during the war, and then became an Ohio State assistant coach in 1946 under Paul Bixler. Esco coached under Bixler, and then Wes Fesler, in the period that put an explanation point on the "Graveyard of Coaches" label affixed to Ohio State. He was retained by Woody and retired from thirty-two years of coaching in the Horseshoe. That would make a good trivia question. Has anyone coached in Ohio Stadium longer than Esco Sarkkinen? Ohio State football was all Esco would ever know.

Back when we were allowed to send people on the road to scout other teams, Sark was known as the "Super Scout." He could tell you everything about every team on our schedule. Before we started getting film, Sark went on the road each weekend. He could come back and just about tell you, "When the guy winks his left eye, he's going to do this. If the guy puts his right hand down first, this is what he is going to do." He was a very detailed guy and nothing got by him. Because he scouted, Esco probably saw fewer football games in Ohio Stadium than any coach in Buckeye history. The only game he ever saw in Ohio Stadium was the last game, and that was only every other year.

The interesting thing about Sark was he didn't know how to drive a car. You don't know how a guy could go to the service, be an All-American, a scholar-athlete, coach at Ohio State as long as he did, and yet not drive a car. But Sark didn't drive. Because of that, Woody gave him inside the circle to recruit—inside of I-270—and Sark's wife drove him to the schools and homes for recruiting. Like all of our All-Americans, Sark had his Buckeye Tree in the All-Americans Grove outside the stadium. Guys used to ask Sark which tree was his. He would always say, "Mine's the one with the big nuts." They would tease him about that. Sark was also a food connoisseur with high culture taste buds, and he knew all the great restaurants in the Big Ten. Esco hooked me up with Schmidt's Bahama Mamas. He took me down to German Village one day (of course I had to drive) and said, "This is the best sausage you're ever going to eat." He was right, and I am still buying them.

Sark sure had seen a lot of Ohio State football and told many tales. The one I liked best was to hear him tell about playing Michigan in '56. Michigan

had Ron Kramer and Tom Maentz at the ends, and both of them were supposed to be All-Americans. Ohio State had Jim Houston and Leo Brown across from them, and it was a battle. Sark said, "The best end on the field that day was Leo Brown, and he only weighed 168 pounds." I liked that because Leo Brown, Ohio State's first black captain, was another one of my guys I monitored for Woody!

Glen Mason came to Ohio State in 1978. I like to take credit for that, but Esco had a hand in that too. The coaching offices were still in St. John Arena then and we had these doorbells. One day Woody started ringing the meeting bells. Of course, that meant we were summoned immediately to the meeting room. When Woody would get to ringing those bells, he would just lean on those buttons. He stood there just pushing and pushing them. You knew that the faster he pushed, the faster you needed to be seated in that room. When Woody lay on those bells that day, we all scurried to the meeting room. Woody told us that Esco Sarkkinen was going to retire at the end of the season. Now this was a major development. Long standing and legendary, Esco Sarkinson had helped make Woody Hayes. And that day, in that meeting, Woody told us that Esco was planning to retire.

Woody asked if anyone knew a coach we could bring in. Someone mentioned some coaches from the Southeastern Conference. Woody put three names on the board. I had only been on staff a year, but I raised my hand anyway and said, "Coach, you know Sark was an Ohio State football player. I think there always should be a place on this staff for a former Ohio State player."

"That's a good idea," Woody said. Darned if he didn't erase those three names. He just wiped them right off, wiped the board clean. I am sure that earned me, the new guy, negative points with the other assistants. "Is there anyone that any of you guys know who could do this job?" Woody asked.

I mentioned a name. "I ran into this guy who is recruiting up in Cleveland," I said. "He's an Ohio State guy, he played here, and he does a good job recruiting." Woody wrote his name on the board.

Then someone mentioned Glen Mason at Illinois. Woody wrote his name on the board. Then he said, "This first guy, he's not tough enough." He erased my candidate's name. That was it. It was erased; it was gone. "Anybody else have any names?" he asked. Of course, by this time, if anyone did they were not about to offer them up. I sure wasn't. Woody had already erased four names that people had proposed. He wiped them clean with one swipe. There were five names up there, and because of me, Woody wiped four of them off. That left Glen.

"Get Gary Moeller on the phone," Woody barked. Gary was the head coach of Illinois then and was an ex-captain of the Ohio State football team.

"Gary, I want permission to talk to Glen Mason," Woody shouted when Gary came on the line. Moeller told Woody he could have permission, and after Woody talked to Mason, Glen packed his bags and came over that night! That was it. That was how the decision was made and how Glen Mason was hired.

Glen Mason was quite a guy and he worked hard at football. He was a good center-guard coach. We roomed together and Glen liked to have a lot

of fun. Glen ended up getting head coaching jobs at Kent State, Kansas, and then Minnesota. Glen did well. He took losing programs and turned them around. He did a good job up at Kent State, then out at Kansas he got them started back, and they are probably sorry now up at Minnesota that they let him go. He made Minnesota with less talent than they have at some of the other Big Ten schools. Minnesota was able to run the ball when Glen was their coach, and obviously he got a lot of that from Coach Hayes and Coach Bruce. Of course, now Glen is a broadcaster in the booth for the Big Ten Network.

George Chaump was one of the nicest guys I have ever known in athletics. When I first came to Columbus, my family was still in Lincoln, so George and his family had me over to his house for dinner many times. George had tremendous knowledge of football, especially the quarterbacks. He coached a bunch of outstanding guys in high school, including tight end Jan White who starred on Ohio State's 1968 national championship team.

George is the one who brought the "I formation" to Ohio State. OSU had been losers in '67, before Chaump came in the spring of '68, to put in the "I formation" for Rex Kern and those Super Sophs. I wasn't around yet, but the story goes that on the second day of spring practice, George told Woody that his offense was old-fashioned and stuffy. He suggested to Woody that he open it up by running out of the "I." Can you imagine the reaction of Coach Hayes? There was Woody—Mr. Three-Yards-And-A-Cloud-Of-Dust—and some greenhorn just out of high school coaching had the nerve to come in and tell him what to do? After he unloaded, Woody supposedly fired Chaump right on the spot.

Of course, like everyone else that Woody fired, he recanted before George ever got out of the building. To Woody's credit, he did let George Chaump put in the I-Formation. Ohio State went undefeated that fall of '68 of course and won the national championship running that "I." In the first three years Chaump was here, that group went 27-2. George was Woody's quarterback coach '68 to '78, the entire period of the rivalry now infamous as the "Ten-Year War." George coached Rex Kern, Cornelius Greene, Rod Gerald, and Art Schlichter. That is not too shabby of a pedigree. The man knew quarterbacks. George later went on to coach at Marshall, Navy, and Tampa Bay in the NFL.

Little Victories: I have told you about some of Woody's other assistants. I guess I should do the same about myself. By the time my second year with Woody rolled around, I had learned from several of the best in the business. I developed my own style and incorporated the best from each one I had learned under and had played for. *The plan is fully developed, as is the idea that fills it.*

My style started the very first time I ever popped the pads clear back in high school. One of the biggest things I learned from my own coaches was how to coach a guy. One time back at Lincoln High, we lined up to hit the sled. Boom! I hit that sled and came off. Coach said, "You're not low enough." Next time I came off low. Boom! I was so low I had grass stains on my knees.

Coach said, "You didn't sustain!"

I thought to myself, "Well, dadgummit, I was low!"

Because of that, when I got into coaching I would tell players, "This is

what we're gonna stress today." I would stress one thing at a time. At Nebraska and then Ohio State, I told them the same thing. "This is what we're going to stress today! If Coach Osborne or Coach Hayes or Coach Bruce gets on you, I'll take it," I would tell them. "But this is what we are going to do today!"

That was how I developed my Little Victories approach. If today we were working on the first step on the block, after practice I would ask, "How many can say that they got that first step down on the block?" Someone would nod, and I would put my hands on the guy and tell him, "Little Victory! "When you get a little victory, we're never going to have to learn this first step again. It's going to become automatic."

I would go out there and coach all these Little Victories, one day at a time. First day, I'd teach them. "The heel replaces the toe. The heel replaces the toe for the first step." Next day it was, "The back foot replaces the hand." Later I would sit up in the stands with Coach Hayes and watch the players run wind sprints in the summer. Whoose, Whoose, Whoose! By they would go. They did not know we were watching them. We were sitting over in the stands in the Biggs facility, and I'd tell Woody, "Watch this guy. His right foot is gonna replace his hand." I said, "Watch this guy. His heel's going to replace his toe." Whoose. They would go by, and that was what happened.

Coach Hayes admitted, "You got it."

"A Little Victory," I answered.

I would tell the guys there are twenty-eight things that can go wrong with a drive block. If you get this Little Victory and that Little Victory, you are never going to have to worry about those two again. I would get excited watching film and would say, "Man, look at those Little Victories! You're really doing it! Lachey, did you see that? You're really doing it. Ward, did you see that? Man, your Little Victories are coming. Lukens, you're really doing it. You got those Little Victories."

Sometimes I would deliberately say that to a second teamer, and the guy playing in front of him would think, "Dang, his Little Victories are coming. He's coming at me; that guy behind me is coming." It was a subtle way I had of pushing the guy at the top of the depth chart.

Of course, one day I might grab someone, always in private, and say, "If your Little Victories don't start coming faster, you're not going to play around here." Still, it was always the Little Victories. I would tell players two positive things before I would tell them a negative. "Your first step was good, your angle was good, but your effort was lousy.

Now, nobody heard that last part, the lousy part, but him. They had to say to themselves, "Dang, he noticed my first step was good. He noticed my angle was good. But my effort was lousy." I never would holler what they did wrong loud enough for the other players to hear. If you never got downfield, I didn't want the others thinking, "He never gets downfield, Coach is hollering every day at him about that." Only that player heard that from me, heard that it was there to work on. It was the positive things that everybody else heard.

I coached John Frank and started telling him about "Little Victories." Later, when he was drafted by the 49ers, and things got tough, he would call me. "Coach, give me that *Little Victory* talk again," John would ask.

Little Victories. Keep getting those *Little Victories*.

I didn't know then how important the *Little Victories* concept would be to me, until the day came that I had to call on it during a crisis in my own life. You'll understand why later.

What Can This Guy Do? You have to ask yourself, as I did with Robert Buford, "What can this guy do?" Buford couldn't block that end, but he could find that daylight, find that hole. Monroe couldn't find that hole, but he could block the end. You have to ask yourself, what can this guy do instead of what can't he do. This is what makes the great coaches different. I saw a tape once on Clarence "Big House" Gaines, the basketball coach who won 828 games at Winston Salem State University and who coached Earle "The Pearl" Monroe and Cleo Hill. When "Big House" retired, only Adolph Rupp had more wins. Gaines would see a guy and know this guy can run, this guy can shoot, this guy can do something else. He could see that. The great coaches could see this. Bear Bryant could do it. Devaney could do it. Osborne could. Woody could. Earle could. All the great ones could do this.

My first year on staff, Woody picked out Todd Bell and said he was going to start the first game as a freshman. Todd was a rover back, but we had a guy coming back who had started that position the year before. Woody asked George Hill about Todd, and George said he would be ready for Oklahoma, the third game. Woody told George, "No, he's going to be ready for Miami, the first game. He's going to make the mistakes in that first game that I don't want him making when we get to Oklahoma."

"Coach, he's not going to be ready," Hill told Woody.

"*Get* him ready, George," Woody demanded.

Earlier I told how Bob Devaney told Monte Kiffin the same thing—"Put Rich Glover at nose guard." And what happened when he did? Jim Lachey is another example. Jim didn't start but one or two games his junior year, and still made All-American his senior year. I had recruited Jim and wanted to keep him as a tackle, but one of the other coaches got together with Earle and they moved him to guard, without me being in on it. That was when I knew I should have learned to play golf. There were a lot of decisions made on the golf course. Every time I lost someone, and they were giving me somebody, Jim was raising his hand. I had recruited Jim and he thought he was coming here to play tackle for me. But we played him at guard. Of course, when Jim went to the pros as the 12th draft pick, they played him at tackle; he's going to be in the Professional Football Hall of Fame one of these days.

The idea is spotting talent; the idea is what can they do? Now, admittedly, "what can they do" has to be what you need. Some of the assistants used to say to Woody in our meetings, "This guy can go eighty, Coach!"

"You ever look at our record book?" Woody would come back. "How many guys have we had in the whole history of Ohio State football go eighty yards in a run from scrimmage?" Dan "Boom" Herron tied the OSU rushing record when he went eighty-nine yards in the 2010 Michigan game, and that was long after Woody was gone. And whose record did Dan tie? Gene Fekete! Gene Fekete ran eighty-nine yards on the '42 team, and up until 2010 we hadn't had anyone go that far since! Shucks, we have only had three other runs of more than eighty yards in the entire history of OSU football, and only

one of those came in Woody's twenty-eight seasons, when Morris Bradshaw went eighty-eight yards in 1971. This guy can take it eighty! What the heck! I want a guy who can take it seven, every time I hand him the pigskin.

Intimidation: Woody was such a contradiction in that he could swear like a drunken sailor, and then go into a living room and charm a mother. Woody said a lot of things that people didn't know about. One of them was, "You can intimidate a lot of people in this world." Woody said you could intimidate ninety percent of the people in this world. That was his thing. Intimidate. He was that way with his "crazy coaches" too.

Woody not only said you could intimidate ninety percent; he also said that if you worked hard at it, you could get a large percentage of the remaining ten percent. Woody was shrewd, though. He also knew the players on his football team he couldn't intimidate. Woody wasn't going to mess with Jack Tatum. He also never messed with Keith Ferguson, one of my guys. Woody used to tell me, "You coach Keith, he won't listen to me."

We were over at Indiana one Friday, doing the run through on the morning before the game. We were in our sweats and during the walk-through Ferg was just kind of stretching. "Dadgum, this is boring," he said. When the guys on the team saw him doing that they said, "We wish we could see Coach go Pearl Harbor on Ferguson." Now, Pearl Harbor was when Woody would get behind the player and beat him in the back like he did some guys. That was the inside joke, "Pearl Harbor." The guys were thinking, if Woody goes Pearl Harbor on Keith, they were going to have to go get Coach somewhere, go pick him up at the other end of the field, because that was how far he was going to go flying!

When it was over, Woody told them to take it on in. Then Woody started hollering for Ferguson. "Ferg, come here. Ferg. Ferg. You hear me. Ferg, come here."

Keith turned around and started walking back. I heard him say under his breath, "I wonder what the ole man wants now!"

Keith came over to Woody and asked, "Yeah, Coach, what do you want?" He stood there shrugging with his hands on his hips.

"Get your hands off your hips."

Ferg just left them there.

Whomp. Woody knocked them down.

Keith put them back up there. This was an eighteen-year-old sophomore, and he just put them back up there.

Woody pushed them down again.

Keith put them up there a second time.

Woody got down on his knee, looked to the heavens, and just hollered, "*Why did you have to come to Ohio State*?"

After that, in the locker room, I was teed because Keith Ferguson was one of my better players, one of my starting tackles. I said, "Coach wants to get after me, but he's using my players to do it. Coach has a beef with Bill Myles, and he's taking it out on *my* players." I had all I could take. "If we win this game," I told myself, "I'm quitting. I'm going to quit. I can't take him treating my players like this."

After that practice, and then his press conference, Woody came into the locker room. Alex Gibbs told Coach, "Bill is mad. He doesn't like how you treated his guys, and he is talking about quitting, talking about leaving."

I had taken my shower by then and was already out on the bus. Coach sent for me. Someone told me, "Coach Hayes wants to see you." I went back in, through the locker room, back to where the coaches dressed. I had been reading about Woody, and by this time, I knew him and understood what made him tick. I believed, as Coach Hayes said, that you could intimidate ninety percent of the people. So when I got back there, I grunted at the top of my toughest voice, *"YOU WANT TO SEE ME?"*

"Yeah," Woody said, "sit down." Then he said, sweet and innocent, "What time is lunch?"

I opened up my briefcase and handed him a schedule. *"LUNCH IS AT 12:15,"* I said, again in my loudest gruff voice. *"DIDN'T YOU GET A SCHEDULE?"* Now all the players were out there listening to this exchange.

Finally, Woody said to me, kind of meekly, "Well, you don't have to be so mean about it."

I went back out and got on the bus. Now, I know if I had said politely, "Coach, lunch is at 12:15," Woody would have jumped all over me! But I had read all these books about him before I ever got there, and Woody never did bother me.

Here's another example. I would give out practice schedules because I was the designated secretary. I would write the coaches' names up in the corner. Handwrite them. Myles. Gibbs. Mason. Chaump. I put on Woody's, "Hayes." Everybody was the same. Last name. I never gave it a thought; I just wrote "Hayes" like everyone else. Woody pulled me aside one time and said pretty directly to me, "Put *Coach Hayes* on mine."

You know what I did? I stopped putting names on schedules. Just to yank his chain. I would just put them on their desk, just give them to people from then on. Didn't put any more names on any of them. I just gave everybody a blank schedule. Woody too. Not another word was ever said about it. You had to stand up to Woody, or he perceived you as weak. I'd liken it to walking to a strange house with a dog lying on that front porch. If you hesitate, look away, telegraph your fear, why, that dog will own you. But if you stand your ground, look that dog in the eye, often he will run off with his tail between his legs.

That is why, as I told you, Woody described Bill Myles as a "mean SOB." That is the best compliment you could ever hope to get from Woody Hayes. *Bill Myles. He's one mean SOB.* All because I turned Woody's own tactic of intimidation on him.

Competing: There is another thing Woody and I had in common. We were both competitors! I would often tell guys they didn't know how to compete. I consider Joey Galloway a great receiver and a real strong guy, both physically and mentally. But I once asked him, "Joey, what can this wide receiver do, what is his best pass route that he runs?"

"I don't know," Joey said.

"You're standing in line behind him every day," I barked. "You run outs,

you run flags, you run posts, you do this, you do that, and you don't know what he does best?"

"I don't watch him," Joey shrugged.

"So how do you know what your competition is?"

I don't know, maybe I was going to be a coach all my life, but I was doing this long before, doing it back when I was a thirteen-year-old. Back then even, I was watching the guys and telling myself I can do it better than that guy. I wanted to start, and this is what you do to get there. But so many people don't. I told that to Lachey one time. Go talk to your position coaches. Find out what you have to do to start.

Of course, some coaches are not so open minded about it. They don't want you to question it. "Because I said so" is their mantra. I used to hear other coaches I coached with say that. A guy would ask, "Why are you doing that?" and *'cause I said so* was their justification.

I had guys that were smart. I used to say we had the smartest guys, so I would tell them what I was doing. I would change a technique, and John Frank would ask me what I was doing. "John, we're doing this because of this and this and this."

"Okay, okay," he would say, because it was explained to him.

One time, though, he said, "But coach, if you did this and this, you could get that done a lot easier."

"Tell me that again, John," I asked him.

He did. And I changed the technique to John's technique. I think where most coaches go wrong is that they don't want to be wrong. They go wrong because they don't like to appear wrong. If a kid asks a coach what he is doing or why he is doing it, many coaches want to say—and I think that is a fallacy with all people—"because" when they don't have a reason. You really don't have a reason if you say, "Just because I said so."

Do It My Way! Coach Hayes was a guy who was going to defend you to the end. But you had better tell him if you were wrong. He got on me one time. He told me one of my players was cutting class and wasn't doing well in that class. "No, that's not true, Coach," I told Woody. "He's getting a passing grade in that class."

"This is the sheet that I've got," Woody said, and pointed to the grade report that clearly showed the player was in trouble. So we called the professor and he said the player was doing passing work. The report Woody had was from three or four weeks before. Boy was I relieved, because with Woody you had to have your ducks in line. His report showed the guy was cutting class, and that was the way it was until I proved him wrong. Fortunately, I was ahead of him on that one, or two of us would have been in trouble.

Another time we had an option play. I had the tight ends arcing a certain way, to go out and block the corners because we were going to leave the end unblocked, and option off the end. Woody wanted my players to turn and go straight out towards the sideline. I wanted them to go out sideways, facing the line of scrimmage. "That's the dumbest thing I have ever heard of," Woody told me. "The guy can't do this, he can't do that, dumbest thing I have ever heard of."

"Coach," I started to say.

"Shut up, Bill. I've been doing this longer than you've been in the world!" He went on and on.

"Coach, will you let me talk?" I finally had to interrupt him.

"Yeah," he answered.

"If I go out this way, Coach," I told Woody, "if I'm sliding out there, if the guy fakes this way and goes that way, I can still get him. If the guy comes straight across I can get him. If the guy loops outside, I can go get him. If he goes inside, I've got him. But if I am going out facing the sideline, and he plants his foot outside and cuts back inside, I can't get back around in time to get him."

"Do it my way," was Woody's answer. "Do it the way I told you. I've been doing this longer than you've been in the world, son."

By that time, I felt about *this small.*

About two or three weeks later, out of the blue, Woody said to the staff, "You know, I've been thinking about it. What Bill was talking about, that makes sense. That's what we ought to do. I've been thinking about it. If you go out as Bill said, facing the line of scrimmage, you can arc on that guy and do what Bill is talking about. The guy could try to beat you inside, but if we do what Bill says, we can get him. We'll do that."

Of course, nobody knew what the heck he was talking about because it just came out of the blue! For the two weeks leading up to that, though, I felt like I was the dumbest joker going. But Woody had been thinking about that all that time, and suddenly came around my way. He would do that. He would come back and say, "Bill had the right idea about this." I saw him do that same thing with other coaches. We all felt small when he was beating us down the day before, but then unexpectedly he would change his mind and admit we were right. If you could convince him, he would change. But he could make you feel real small when he argued his point, and sometimes you couldn't win because he held the trump card, of course. He was the head coach.

Toughness: Woody and I worked not only to get our kids to compete, but to make them tough. It is hard to go out there and play for three hours. I used to tell my guys, you go out there and hit the guy in the mouth the first play, and tell him, *"I'm going to be here for three hours. Will you be here?"*

Part of that toughness is really smacking people around. Sometimes kids today talk too much. You didn't see Lachey, Chris Ward, or my other players out there doing a lot of talking. They let their actions talk for them, not their lips.

Driving that sled makes you tough. Woody would never let the offensive linemen practice a day without hitting that sled. When you hit the sled, you get used to working as a group. Seven guys. Hitting in unison. One day I was trying to pass it up, because he only gave us twenty minutes for individual drills and I had all these things to cover. I was out there doing something when Woody hollered from the sled, "Hey. Bring that line over."

"Coach, I'm trying to cover . . ."

"We're going to hit the sled every day," Woody interrupted.

"Coach, I have all these—"

"You do that some other time," he barked. "You take that group out on the blacktop and put that play in during your meeting. Don't you do that out here if I give you a short session. You knew it was going to be short. You should have gotten it in. Coach them on the way out here. Go talk to them while they're stretching. *We're going to hit that sled every day!"*

We did hit the sled that day. And every day after that. I learned that lesson!

Challenge the Great Ones: Another thing Coach Hayes taught me was to give that legend, that All-American, some extra responsibility. Coach Hayes demanded, "You challenge the great ones." Those were his exact words. If the defense calls for a guy to do this, you give him that plus something else. If the defense calls for you to do this, everybody's got to learn to do this. But if you have a great player, you give him that job and another quarter of a job. If he does that, you give him that job, and make him a man and a half. If he does that, you give him that job and a man and three-quarters, and so forth.

Esco Sarkkinen told me about him and Woody doing that with Jim Houston, the great end from the fifties. They had Jim doing a man and a quarter job with no problem. So they gave him a man and a half's job, and he handled that. Then they wanted him to do a man and three-quarter's job, and he couldn't do it. They lost a game because of something that happened, and Woody blamed Jim.

Woody remembered Jim Houston for that one thing. *Jim Houston lost contain in the Michigan game.* Woody was always talking about that, always talking about Jim Houston losing contain in the Michigan Game, and how important that was. Contain. Contain. There was no greater sin, especially in The Rivalry. He would always stress that to George Hill. Houston lost contain. Finally, Esco Sarkkinen got tired of it. "Hey, Coach," he said. "I've been listening to this for so long. Jim didn't lose contain in that game. Jim Houston did not lose contain!" Of course, Woody wouldn't believe him, so Sark got out the film and showed him. He showed him and proved to Woody that Jim Houston did not lose contain.

Woody looked at the film and admitted, "Dadgum, I was wrong."

Now Jim Houston was my age. He had been playing in the fifties. He had gone on to Cleveland as a four time Pro Bowler. And for more than twenty years, Woody had been mad at him. I was a coach in the '70s, and Woody Hayes was still mad at Jim Houston because he lost contain back in the fifties! After the episode with Sark, though, next time Jim came down, Woody apologized to him, and thereafter Jim Houston was the greatest thing Woody Hayes had ever seen or coached! But he probably would have gone to his grave mad if Sark hadn't taken out the film and shown Woody that Jim Houston didn't lose contain.

Woody was right, though, on challenging Jim Houston. Woody was the only head coach I had seen that challenged a legendary player, like Jim was, and gave him an additional responsibility. Therefore, he had to work, he had to extend himself. The great player doesn't have to extend himself just doing what a regular guy does, so as a coach you challenge him to do more.

When we had Aaron Brown, we did that same thing with him at nose

guard. Instead of having one gap to cover, Aaron had a gap-and-a-half. It was the same thing I had seen Monte Kiffin do out at Nebraska with Rich Glover at nose guard and Willie Harper at defensive end. These guys were All-Americans. You challenged them. You had everything covered with the regular guy, but when you had that super guy, you gave them extra!

That is what made the difference between Woody Hayes, Tom Osborne, and the ordinary coaches. They understood that. They understood about getting people in the right place and challenging them. That is why people say about Woody Hayes, Tom Osborne, Bob Devaney, Earle Bruce—the great ones I worked with—they could take theirs and beat yours, and they could take yours and beat theirs.

When you think about it, life is like that too. Want something done? Give it to a busy person. How often in your job or your life do they give more to those who can carry the load? How often does the boss go to the *can do* person in your organization? How often do you go to the friend you know will be there? Where are you in the scheme of your own life's journey? Where are you with your friends, your loved ones? Are you a half-a-person? Or, are you a person-and-a-half?

SIC and SOL: We make so much out of football, like it is rocket science. It is a simple game. You have this spot, I have this spot. If I can knock you off your spot, I win. If you can knock me off my spot, you win. I am going to try to knock you off. You are going to try to knock me off. Who is going to knock who off the spot the most? That is what it all gets down to.

Only one of us can win that spot. You can't knock me off the spot if you are just going to rub bellies with me, if you are just going to massage me. But if you come in with that headgear and your fists—Boom! Somebody is going to lose the spot. It is all about putting that defender in the spot you want him, and keeping him from the spot he is trying to get to. Do that, and you have created a hole wide enough for your running back to drive a truck through.

The world of an offensive lineman is all about Techniques, Gaps, and Calls. You often hear, "He is in a 5 technique or a 7 technique." *Techniques* refer to how the defenders are lining up opposite my offensive linemen. Were they nose to nose, or on the shoulder?

Gaps refer to the spaces between the offensive linemen. A-gap is between center and guard, B-gap between guard and tackle, and C-gap is between the tackle and end. If a defender was playing on my offensive tackle's outside shoulder, he was playing a 5 technique. That means the defender had to keep his outside shoulder free, because that was his gap—the outside. The defender was on my tackle's outside shoulder because he had C-gap responsibility. The whole defense is designed around everyone having responsibility for a certain gap. If my tackle could get to the defensive lineman's outside shoulder, the defender had lost. My tackle would turn him in and then C-gap was wide open.

Calls tell everyone how my linemen are going to block the play, which defenders each of my linemen is going to take, and to what spot they will move them. I taught my linemen to make all our calls. When they came up to the line, they would look down and see where the defenders were

shaded—which gaps or shoulders they lined up on—then make the call. I had a scheme that went clear back to Cecil Patterson's philosophy of naming plays. ***SIC*** was my scheme. I would tell my tackles when they came to the line: 1) Get your **S**plit, 2) Look **I**nside out, 3) Make the **C**all. It was easy—**S**plit, **I**nside Out, **C**all. ***SIC*** was all they had to remember to call how we were going to block it.

The reason I told the tackle to look inside was if he looked down and the guy inside was in a zero or one technique, he knew he was responsible for A-gap. That was easy to read. When my guy came up to the line and saw maybe a freshman across from him, that freshman was playing him right foot to right foot—what I call shoe to shoe—because he had that gap. The defender knew that was his gap, and he had to have his left shoulder free, so he was cheating to his left side. But he was telegraphing it.

But the guys who messed you up were guys like Lee Roy Selmon. I got the idea of looking down while I was at Nebraska because of Lee Roy Selmon of Oklahoma. When Lee Roy was playing across from you, there was no way he was going to tip off his technique. Lee Roy was so good he could line up one way and play inside, outside, straight up, B-gap, or C-gap. Lee Roy could play all that from the same position, he was just that good. He could line up nose to nose, and there was no way you were going to get his outside shoulder if he had the outside gap, or his inside shoulder if he had the inside gap. That was when I said, okay, when we play Lee Roy and Oklahoma we are going to look inside out and get our keys for the calls from someone else, because one of these other jokers will be giving it away. We couldn't key on Leroy, but at least one of the other guys on the defensive line would always give it away. They all were not as good as Leroy.

I told you about Willie Harper at Nebraska, who also played nose up on the guy across from him. Willie was just like Lee Roy. Head up. You never knew if he had to keep this shoulder free or that shoulder free, and Willie too gave me the idea of looking down and checking the other guys out.

Now, if they had a whole team of those great guys across there, you could never know how to block them. Of course, they never had all great guys over there, so that was why I had my guys looking down. In all my years of coaching, Willie Harper and Lee Roy Selmon were the only two who could play their technique all from one spot. When a guy was a freshman, he was usually playing right shoe to right shoe. The next year he would move in, right eye to right eye. And by looking at these other guys, my guy could see "the nose guard is facing me, so I know Willie Harper is not coming this way." Or he knew: "The guard is cheating that way, so Lee Roy Selmon is coming here."

I taught my ends a similar scheme. Instead of ***SIC***, though, I told my tight ends to think ***SOL***. When you come to the line, 1) Get your **S**plit, 2) Look **O**utside in, and 3) ***L***isten to how the tackle calls that we are going to block it. If the tight end looked outside, and saw someone, he thought 2-cover. If he looked outside, and there was nobody up on the line, he knew it was 3-cover. He knew that if he was supposed to run a post pattern, he couldn't run it. The middle guy in cover-three was going to be sitting there waiting on him. He had to change the route to post-corner. It, too, was easy—**S**plit, **O**utside in, **L**isten. ***SOL*** was all they had to know.

I made up the terms ***SIC*** and ***SOL***. These were mine. They were unconventional, but I tried to make things the way I remembered things, associating them with something. That is how I remembered supination and pronation in physical education back in college. Supination: I could hold soup; the palm faced up. Pronation: I couldn't. Supination and soup both began with S. All I had to do was remember soup, and I could keep them straight. The way I learned the Great Lakes in school was spelling HOMES—Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior! HOMES was my cue. When we had that on a test, I just wrote that down and filled in my answer. That is the way I remembered things, and I tried to simplify things that same way for my players. Coach Tressel always talked about slowing the game down. One way to slow it down is to make it instinctive, to reduce what the player has to think about. That was how I did that.

Later in Earle's era, John Frank would become one of the best I ever had at slowing the game down and recognizing defenses. John would come out, and if there was no one outside, John knew it was 3-cover and he could run 84Y-shallow, the play that made John Frank. Every day in practice, as we were hitting the sled, John Frank was coming up hollering "2-cover, 3-cover, man." We were just hitting the seven-man sled, yet John would come to the sled and ***SOL***—get his split, look outside, and then listen for the tackle call. All the time he was hollering "2-cover, 2-cover," or "3-cover, 3-cover." The reason John Frank was hollering those dummy calls was to get him used to saying that, to look out there. The rest of the team was looking at us—remember we were just hitting the sled, there was no defense over there—and thinking, "Those dumb linemen are at it again. Why are they hollering 2-cover? They're just hitting the sled." But we were getting it done.

I was teaching my guys to make not only calls, but dummy calls. Joe Lukens became great at making those. Some people only made the call when the play was coming towards them. It is a big red flag. But Joe was always making dummy calls. He was the best there was at it. His guy never knew if we were coming his way or not. He did know though that every time Joe called Purple, he got his head knocked off with a double team. Joe knew those guys were scared of Purple. Sometimes when we ran to the opposite side, Joe would just call Purple for the dummy call. Those defenders were not dumb. Every time he was calling Purple, they were getting their jock strap knocked off, so they were putting pressure to their outside, ready for the double team that never came. Joe just cakewalked inside of that guy, cut him off, and headed downfield to get someone else. All because Joe Lukens made a dummy call of Purple.

That was how I developed the Bill Myles style of coaching, and perfected it with Woody Hayes and his "Crazy Coaches." It needed to be perfect, too, at a place like Ohio State, because on the third Saturday of every November the greatest rivalry in college sports rolled around.

The tick tock of the Michigan clock. It was a whole separate act in the life of Woody Hayes!

WOODY HAYES—THEY BROKE THE MOLD

ACT IV—Tick Tock of the Michigan Clock

"I'll tell you how it started," said Charlie Ream, who played for OSU from 1934 to 1937. "People around here were tired of losing to Michigan. Simon Lazarus, the president of the Lazarus store, and Herb Levy, president of the Union Company, were big, big, football fans. They put their heads together and came up with the Gold Pants Club. They created this charm made of gold that would be given to every letterman that played on a team that beat Michigan." Schmidt's first team did just that, walloping the Wolverines 34-0 and thus earning the first set of gold pants.

The Gold Pants Club, www.goldpants.com, reprinted with permission.

The above anecdote comes from the home page of the Gold Pants Club Web Site, the group that awards those gold pants for each victory over Michigan. The whole world knows that Michigan is our rival, and those gold pants are the great symbol of that rivalry.

The world also knows you cannot write about Woody without writing about the Michigan game. They are inseparable. Everyone knows Woody never said Michigan's name. It was the "School Up North." I have told you of my early connection with that rivalry, a connection as old as the legendary "Script Ohio." When I was born at 9:10 on that Saturday morning, November 21, 1936, it was just forty-two days after Script Ohio was first performed in Ohio Stadium and just a few hours before Ohio State players won their third pair of gold pants in as many seasons, defeating Michigan 21-0 in that same Stadium.

Merle Wendt was one of the Buckeye players earning the gold that day in '36. Ironically, I would later come to know Merle through the Captains' Breakfast. The Captains' Breakfast was on Sunday morning of homecoming weekend when I was with Woody. It was tough for the current captains to come if they had lost the homecoming game the day before. Coach Tressel moved it to Saturday morning when he came, and it is now held before the game.

Merle was quite a gentleman, very classy, and one of the eight three-time All-Americans in Ohio State football history. Merle was fourth in line after Chic Harley, Wes Fesler, and Lew Hinchman. After Merle, there would not be another three-timer until Archie, Tom Skladany, and then Mike Doss. Now there is one more, James Laurinaitis.

I know the game was played in Ohio Stadium the day I was born because it was an even year. That's another thing about that game. Even years are in

the Horseshoe; odd years are played up there. That is all I need to know to remember where the game will be played. Is it an even year or an odd year? It is easy to remember, too, because the "odd ones" are played "up there." Fitting isn't it—the odd years at the odd place!

When I was coaching for Earle, we won the Michigan game on my birthday in 1981. John Cooper won it once on my birthday, and the infamous tie was on my birthday. So I have had some good birthdays! Of course, I have had some sad ones too because we have lost it on that day, in the thirty-plus years I was at Ohio State. But I have had more good ones than bad ones, because I really enjoy beating the Wolverines. It has been a little thing. Coop used to say, "We ought to postpone this game till your birthday," because he had never lost that game on my birthday!

The Job Saver: Michigan is always the main event because they are our biggest rival and we are their biggest rival. The two states touch; both recruit the same players. They recruit Ohio heavily. Two of their Heisman Trophy winners—Desmond Howard and Charles Woodson—are Ohio guys. Both states are football powers. Brother has played against brother in the game. There is a store in Toledo that has blue on one side and scarlet on the other. And of course, there are the gold pants. My gold pants record was four and four against them as a coach. I won four as a coach and also got several pairs after I left coaching and was in athletic administration.

Now there was a great rivalry between Nebraska and Oklahoma while I was coaching in Lincoln. But before that, when I was a kid growing up, Oklahoma was on a roll. They used to call it the Big One and Little Six, because Bud Wilkinson was just beating everybody and beating them big. At that time, Nebraska might have considered Oklahoma their greatest game, but I think Oklahoma considered Texas their big game, because they played it every year in the Cotton Bowl. I don't think Texas considered Oklahoma their biggest game; instead I think they considered the Texas A&M Aggies their big game. Those were three big schools, but each had a different rival, so their rivalries didn't match Ohio State-Michigan.

Our game is between two of the top five winningest programs in the history of college football. It is played in two of the largest stadiums in the country. You have two big states, our Ohio with almost twelve million and the state up north of about ten million, whereas Oklahoma has about four million and Nebraska less than two million. Our game engages nearly four times the population of those two states. I consider it the greatest rivalry going. The game goes back a long way with the first game played back in 1897. And, since 1935, it has been the last game of the year. Big Ten commissioner Jim Delaney found out just how big it was in 2011, when the conference brought Nebraska into the Big Ten and floated that trial balloon about moving the OSU-Michigan game to a different spot in the schedule. The outcry by folks—even some from outside the two schools—showed just how big that game is.

Army-Navy is a big game. Southern Cal-UCLA is a big game. Southern Cal-Notre Dame always used to be a big game, the Midwest against the West Coast. But of course, with football originating in the East, Ohio State and Michigan go back so much further. You look at the number of championships in the Big

Ten that Ohio State holds and the number Michigan holds. Ohio State and Michigan have seventy-seven combined, and the other current schools in the Big Ten only have eighty-five all together. Those two have almost as many wins as the rest of the league. These two teams have certainly been dominant in their league. That is why I consider our game the greatest rivalry going. Not only was I part of the "Rivalry," I was there during part of that special period between Bo and Woody known as the "Ten-Year War." There was no greater thing a football coach could ever have been a part of than that chess match between the master teacher and his star pupil! To have coached in that game, with Woody and Bo, well, it was a once in a lifetime thing. It was that big.

Fate has been kind to Bill Myles. Born too late for World War II or the Korean War, I was not drafted when Vietnam came along. One of the lucky ones, I never had to face the horrors of real war, the carnage of armed conflict between nations. Now if you have ever stood at Andersonville or Gettysburg, or maybe the American Cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach at Colleville-sur-Mer, Normandy, and looked at those rows and rows and rows of white crosses honoring thousands of fallen soldiers, you are probably thinking it is disrespectful to equate a football game to war. Well, frankly, it is. War is real. Football is a game. But have you ever been in a game where your livelihood, your income, a roof over your kids' heads and food on your family's table all depended on the outcome? In that sense, maybe war in the generic sense of intense conflict is a rather apt description of the contest between Bo and Woody during those ten years.

Lee Corso once wrote an article in the *American Football Coaches Association Journal* titled "The J. S. Game"—the Job Saver Game—the game that will save a coach's job because it is big to the fans and alumni. You had to win that J. S. Game. If you look back in the Ohio State press guide, you will see that until Cooper came along, a coach that lost to Michigan three years in a row got fired. If you look at the Michigan press guide, until Lloyd Carr came along, if you lost three years in a row, you got fired. Well, Carr left under pressure. Of course, Cooper eventually was fired. So was Rich Rodriguez. Even Woody had lost three in a row to Michigan the year he was fired. That was the deal; so yes, it was the Job Saver Game.

Michigan Week: Michigan week was the culmination of the season. Under Woody and later under Earle, practices usually were closed. People would do things that might seem silly to an outsider: tape up the scout team helmets with those wings, put blue rubber things in the urinals, and make rugs with that School Up North's emblem on it. Coach Hayes had a gold shirt that he put on guys when they were injured in practice, which meant, "If you can't practice, you're helping Michigan." I saw Woody tell secretaries to go home at noon and change if they had on any blue or gold combination—at any time, not just during Michigan week.

One time I asked one of the secretaries wearing those colors, "Who's paying your paycheck?"

"You are," she answered.

"Well, what are you doing advertising Michigan here?" I asked her. It was a thing that you got from Woody and it has stuck with me to this day.

Recently at my church, I told a good friend I usher with, "I can't shake hands with you today because you've got a blue and gold tie on."

He said, "Well, I wear a blue suit a lot."

"Yeah, but you don't always put gold with it," I countered.

I would wake up nights during Michigan week and think, "I didn't go over the fold block, I didn't go over what to do if they blitzed." There was always something. I would knock the clock off the nightstand, tossing and turning in the middle of the night. It was a week like no other week. But when you are a coach, that is what you come to Ohio State for. All my life, from the time I was just a little boy, lying on the floor, listening to football on the radio, I wanted to be in a game like that.

I played in rivalry games starting in high school. One Thanksgiving Day, when I was a freshman at Lincoln High, we played Sumner of Kansas City, Kansas, in the coldest football game I have ever played in. It was the war between the two Kansas Cities; it was for bragging rights. When I was at Southeast High School, "the game" was with Southwest for a trophy that passed back and forth for the Southside championship. Then, when I got to Nebraska, the Oklahoma game was it. I have always liked those big rivalry games. But the Michigan game is the game of games. I told my players:

"If you don't want to coach or play in this game, you're not alive. Something's wrong with you. And if someone has to talk to you to get you ready to play in this game, you've got no place in it. All your life you've been waiting for this game. Can you put out for three hours? It's only three hours. Three hours out of your life. You've got four times to do this. If you can't get ready for this game, you're not alive; they might as well put you in your grave."

There are a whole bunch of guys now who have walked off that field a winner over those Wolverines every year for four years. Archie Griffin is the only Heisman Trophy guy who can say that. Archie never lost to Michigan. And the group with Merle Wendt never lost to them, but then the players only played three of their four years. Recently was the long string in the Tressel era.

You should hear Hop Cassidy talk about the game, about it being the greatest thing, about its intensity. Hop talked about when the Michigan great Ron Kramer had his fist inside Hop's face mask. The story got back to me that Ron Kramer said that Hop bit him. I asked Hop about that once. Hop's answer: "Everything outside of the face mask is all right. Everything inside the face mask belongs to me. If he said I bit him, I bit him!"

Coach Tressel embraced the Michigan game. There is a big countdown clock on the wall of the weight room at the Woody Hayes Center. I call it "Tick-Tock of the Michigan Clock." You can tell how many days, hours, and minutes there are before we tee it up against Michigan, and it is constantly running. When you are on the treadmill, you can see that clock. When you are on the weights, you can see that clock. You know you have that much time left to get ready. Every hour of every day, you see that clock ticking down. Tress started it when he first got the job. Of course, he thrilled the Ohio State fan base when he was introduced as the new football coach at halftime of a basketball game on the floor of the Schottenstein Center. The very first thing he told the Buckeye nation was that in 310 days, we're going to be

playing that School Up North and you'll be proud of us. He sure lived up to that with his record against that school.

Go Bussy Go: The stories about Woody and Michigan go on and on. I told you that under Woody I was responsible for the buses. I had to keep the buses on time so I would always make a dry run of the bus route at the opposing school, and especially at Ann Arbor. In 1977, we were up there staying quite a ways from the Big House. Ron Granader, a former OSU player who helped me recruit the state of Michigan, lived up there so I called Ron and said, "Pick me up at the hotel and take me the way the bus driver will go to the stadium tomorrow." We got in his car and made a dry run. I timed it.

"Coach, it takes eighteen minutes to get to the stadium if we go thirty-five miles per hour," I told Woody that evening. "But we've got to cross a railroad track and we need to allow time for that in case a train comes."

"Okay," Woody said.

The next day we were on the bus and right on time. Woody was sitting up front on one side and I was over on the other. We came to that set of railroad tracks and, wouldn't you know it, there was a train passing. There we were, on our way to the Michigan game, and our bus was stalled. Woody just sat there as if in a trance.

"Uh-uh . . . uh-uh . . . uh-uh." He was going over his game plan.

Well, we sat there and the train kept rolling by. Clickity-clack. Clickity-clack. We'd been sitting there for a while—maybe thirty-five or forty cars had passed us—when suddenly Woody realized we were not moving. "*Let's go, bussy. Come on, bussy. Go,*" he hollered at the driver. Now, Woody was sitting directly behind the driver, and of course when he hollered, "*Go*" right in his ear, the poor driver was scared senseless.

"The train, the train!" the driver screamed. The train was right in front of us, and there was Woody hollering to go. Woody had been sitting all that time, with his eyes closed, in his zone, going through his game plan, and didn't even know there was a train there. We had been waiting for that train, and all that time, Woody had been sitting there shaking his head, "Uh-uh, uh-uh, yeah, uh-uh, yeah," as he ran through that game plan.

That's Respect: I can remember coming down the tunnel with Woody up at Michigan. Up there, both teams came down the same tunnel from the locker rooms and then ran out into the stadium. We would come down that tunnel, and their fans would see this little black baseball cap with an O on it appear in the opening. We would be standing there waiting to take the field, and all they could see was that baseball hat, but that was enough. It would start. They would be booing him like you wouldn't believe.

Woody would be standing there, and it was just like in Champaign, but in spades. You couldn't have gotten him any higher. He'd be prancing from side to side and looking over his shoulder, soaking it in and sweeping his eyes over that big stadium. He would scrunch his face, turn his nose up, and then he would say, "They're booing us! That's respect, boys. That's respect. They don't do that here for Northwestern. They don't do that here for Indiana. They don't do that in this stadium for Illinois. But they're booing us. That's

respect, boys. That's a great feeling, standing here. There are 105,000 people in this place, boys, and you're the only sumbitches that are right!" Man, he enjoyed that moment. He was so cocky; he just had you believing that stuff.

Then there was the time he reversed order up there. He would usually say, "Red One and Bucks up front." Now, Red One was the first-string offense and Bucks was first-string defense. I don't know where he came up with those names, but he did. Then he would add, "AYOs in the back." Of course, AYO stood for "All You Others." We would go running out on the field with AYOs in the back. Everyplace we went, it was Red One and Bucks up front, AYOs in the back. Everyplace except that day in Michigan Stadium.

We got ready to take the field that year and Woody hollered, "AYOs up front!" Now Woody knew what was going to happen, and it did. Our guys promptly got in a fight in the tunnel with the Michigan players! The two teams were duking it out under the stands before the game had even started. Of course, Woody knew that would happen, so he didn't want any of his starters up front. He wasn't going to take the chance that any of his first teamers would get hurt fighting in the tunnel, so he sacrificed the AYOs! I was standing there thinking, "Shoot, I've got no pads on or anything, and these guys are killing each other. There are a hundred thousand people out there that don't even know what's happening inside this tunnel!" That is the stupidest thing in the world, to have both teams coming down the same tunnel in a game like that!

It's All on the Dash: My father used to say, "It is all on the dash." Were you on the left side of that dash, or the right side of that dash? That surely fits the Michigan game. Anything can happen in that game. That is why they made that ball pointed. You can intercept a pass, pick up a fumble, slip on a wet spot. Anything can happen. In a game that big, everything is magnified. The first time Woody Hayes beat Michigan he wasn't supposed to win. It was 1952 and Ohio State hadn't beaten Michigan in seven straight tries. Michigan came into Ohio Stadium flying high, and a win would have secured the Wolverines the Big Ten Championship and a Rose Bowl. Woody's team shut them out that day until late in the game. The Sunday headline in *The Columbus Citizen* the next morning read, "Bucks Stomp Wolves, 27-7." And the Buckeyes were not supposed to win.

In 1969, Woody took to Ann Arbor what Jack Park described as "one of the finest teams ever assembled." That team had won the national championship in 1968 and was a 17-point favorite to beat Michigan. A win would have given them a sure second national championship. They were facing a young team with a new coach. We all know what happened. When the sun finally slipped behind the western horizon, that new coach had schooled his old master. Bo Schembechler had fired a 24-12 opening salvo in the Ten Year War. And Michigan wasn't supposed to win! So many times it's who's got it that day, plus who gets the bounce of that pointed ball.

In 1977, my first year of coaching with Woody, we had twenty-three first downs to Michigan's ten up there. But we lost. We had this and that over them. We dominated. But we lost. That was the game a cameraman got in Woody's face and then filmed him on national TV coming off the field and

ripping his headset off. Woody lunged at the guy, and although it was later acknowledged that the cameraman got too close, Woody was reprimanded and put on probation. My father called after that game to ask how we did.

"Dad, we lost 14-6, but we dominated them. We had twenty-three first downs to their ten. We had 352 yards total offense to their 196. We dominated."

That was when my father gave me his speech. "Son," he asked, "are you going to be on the left hand side of the paper tomorrow morning? Twenty years from now it will be just one little line in the book. Michigan 14, Ohio State 6. It will just be one little line in the paper. It won't be first downs this, yards rushing that."

Dad was right. You look at the paper. Winners on left and losers on right. My dad was good at that. I do it to this day. Before every game, I would ask Coach Tressel, "You gonna be on the left hand side of the paper?" It was our little ritual. I would ask my coaches over at the Jesse facility, "Gonna be on the left hand side of the paper?" I'll be asking Urban the same thing now: "Gonna be on the left hand side of the page?"

The only thing that came close to my Dad's speech was when Jesse Jackson was preaching at Jackie Robinson's funeral. Jesse said, "1919–1972, it's all on the dash." It's all on that dash—what you do, from when you are born to when you die—it's all on that dash. We all have that dash. What do you put on your dash? That eulogy always reminded me about my father's talk, about being on the left hand side of the dash.

All my life my father was good about that. He would ask, "How'd you do in the 440?"

"If there'd just been three more yards, I would have gotten the guy," I would answer him.

"They don't run a 443," Dad would say. "You knew it wasn't going to be 443 at the start. If the other guy knew it was going to be three more yards, he might have run a little harder!" Dad didn't let me have any excuses and sure kept us kids from getting the big head. That came in handy in the Michigan rivalry, because that was a game in which neither team was going to beat the other. Someone was going to lose. And the only team that would be remembered was the one that finished on the left hand side of the page.

Great Players in Great Games: Big players play big in big games, and the Michigan rivalry makes or breaks many a player. I remember Marcus Marek, one of our great linebackers. Marcus intercepted a pass in every Michigan game he ever played in. Todd Bell is another one I think of often. To this day, I still see Todd Bell picking up that blocked punt in the Big House and running it in for a TD. It has been thirty-one years, but I can close my eyes and see it like yesterday. Woody had recruited Todd, but that play happened in Earle's first year, 1979. It was an odd year, so that meant we were playing at that School Up North. The Buckeyes were undefeated at 10-0, ranked number two in the nation, and Michigan was 8-2 and ranked number thirteen. There were 106,255 screaming fans in the stadium that day, then the largest crowd ever in college football history. We went up 3-0 when Vlade Janakievski kicked a 23-yarder at the start of the second quarter. But then, three-time Michigan

All-American Anthony Carter caught a 59-yard pass, and ran it in for a TD to put the Wolverines ahead. With eight seconds in the half, Vlade kicked a 25-yard field goal to take us into the locker room just one point down, at 7-6.

It was a defensive day. Five times in that first half, we were inside their forty and didn't score. Michigan didn't fare much better! In the second quarter, the Wolverines went for it on fourth and inches inside our two-yard line, but Marcus Marek and Al Washington stuffed the play to save a score and get us the ball. In the third period, Art Schlichter put us ahead 12-7 with an 18-yard TD pass to Chuck Hunter. It was a great acrobatic catch in the corner of the end zone. Every time I see Chuck, we talk about that now because Chuck had been playing tight end and we moved him out wide for that play.

Michigan came right back to take the lead 15-12 with a TD and a two-point conversion. With just over four minutes left in the game, our backs were against the wall. Michigan had the ball, but we forced them to punt deep in their own territory. We blocked that punt and Todd Bell scooped it up and took it eighteen yards for the winning touchdown. Vlade missed the extra point, so the game ended Ohio State 18, Michigan 15. It propelled us to a number one versus number three meeting with USC in the Rose Bowl for the national championship. That was a big play in a big game by a big player.

The outcome could have been different had Bo not gone for it on fourth and inches at the two yard line in the second quarter. Fourth down. Two-yard line. If the Wolverines just kicked that field goal, it would have been a tie game. After all, though, Bo was a disciple of Woody and just as stubborn as his old master. A clone of Woody Hayes, Bo Schembechler was going to let anyone tell him that he couldn't make a first down on fourth and inches. No one except the Buckeye defense who rose up to make the stop that day.

Great players come up great in big games. News accounts of that game praise the great play Jim Laughlin made that day in blocking the punt that Todd Bell scooped up for the TD. It is the stuff legends are made of and heroes are born, and it has been told and retold. None other than historian Jack Park credits that play to Jim. In the Ohio State Football Encyclopedia, Jack describes it as "one of the biggest plays in the history of the Ohio State-Michigan series . . ."

There is only one problem. Jim Laughlin didn't touch that ball! Mike D'Andrea actually blocked that punt! Under Coach Bruce, each assistant was responsible for one or two men on the special teams. Mike D'Andrea was my guy. When he came off the field, he was hollering to me, "I got it, Coach. I got it. I blocked that punt!"

"I know you got it, I know you got it," I was yelling back, because Mike D'Andrea was the only guy I was watching on that play! Mike was *my guy* on the punt block. I was zoned in on Mike to make sure he did his job. Mike blocked that punt and Jim Laughlin received credit for it all these years. All the papers had glowing accounts in the game day write-ups about Jim Laughlin blocking that punt for the victory over Michigan.

In 2009, at our thirty-year reunion, Jim finally told me, "Coach, you're right. Mike got it." Jim admitted that it was Mike and not him. But the papers and books have for all these years reported that Jim Laughlin blocked

that punt to win the Michigan game. It has been published so long, it's legendary. And Mike doesn't care. We have had some good laughs about it, though. Mike's just happy that he got it and his first pair of gold pants, that third Saturday in November up at the Big House. So am I, because I also got my first pair that day. I went on to win several, but that pair is special, both because they were my first and because *my guy* blocked the punt to win them for me!

It Hurts You As Much As Me: The pressure on Ohio State coaches to beat Michigan is unbelievable. When I was an assistant coach, I used to speak quite often at the Monday luncheons of one of our booster groups. One of the things that really got to me was the day one guy told me it hurt him just as much as it hurt me when we lost to Michigan. I stood there on the platform in front of this group of probably 150 to 200 men, and composed myself as I thought, "Now, how can I say this to him pleasantly?"

"How can you stand there," I asked him, "how can you stand there and tell me it hurts you as much as it hurts me when we lose to Michigan? You don't have anything invested in this but the ticket you bought to this game. You think about it the day of the game. You are in it for three hours. And then that is it. I have been working on this game since we last played them a year ago," I went on. "All summer long I have been out there with my guys. I have Jimmy Moore out there running with a puffed up knee. I've got the guys out there in early November practicing in the sleet and the mud. It is cold. We are going through it. We are out there when it's ninety-five degrees in August working in the heat. We are working every day, for 365 days, all to beat Michigan. And you tell me it hurts you as much as it hurts me? My family depends on this. If we don't beat Michigan enough, I'm fired. Nothing happens to you. So don't tell me that this bothers you as much as it bothers me."

The gentleman responded, "I've never looked at it like that. Do all coaches think like that?"

I was just getting warmed up. "I don't know about all coaches," I answered, "but I know about me, and my job depends on it. My family depends on it. Here was this guy going out there with a swollen knee every day, practicing for this one game. And then you are going to tell me, with that same guy sitting right here on the stage beside me, that it hurts you as much as it hurts me. What did you lose, ten dollars in a bet? I might have to move out of town if we lose enough."

That is about the only time I ever got on a fan real hard. I can understand a fan talking about it, but shoot, he or she is just going to brag for a couple of weeks, and then it is over. But for us, every day Woody would say, "Get the pictures." Now, if he said get the Northwestern film, get the Illinois tape, get Wisconsin, it meant we were working on the current week's opponent. But when he said, "Get the pictures," well, that meant one thing and only one thing. He didn't say a name. He didn't need to. Everybody knew what that meant and whom we were going to work on. We were working on them every day. *Every single day.* We never said Michigan. It was that School Up North. We taped those helmet wings on our scout team during practice. We'd put rubber things in the urinals with a big gold M on them. And you

are going to tell me it hurts you to lose to Michigan as much as it hurts me? The game is just that big.

The tick-tock of that Michigan Clock is always running, and the pressure is relentless. And in 1978, after three straight Michigan losses, it reached up and bit Woody like it had everyone else. Which brings me to the final act of the Coach Hayes chapter.

WOODY HAYES—THEY BROKE THE MOLD

Act V—The Final Scene

Woody was such a larger than life figure. I was with him only two seasons, although having read this chapter it might seem like forever. But the end came abruptly, and when it did, like with many other epic figures, it was such a hard fall. When it happened, I was right next to Woody, in the thick of it, and I owe you—and history—my version of the story.

The Buildup: I talked about pressure in the previous section on Michigan. There sure was pressure going into the 1978 season, having lost the two previous years to Michigan, and to Alabama in the Sugar Bowl. On top of that, we opened with Penn State. Still, we had high hopes at the beginning of the 1978 season, including a highly touted freshman quarterback named Art Schlichter. But even before the first kickoff, there was an ill omen of things to come. It has long been superstition that if the OSU Drum Major doesn't catch the baton on the throw over the south goal post after the Ramp Entrance, it is bad luck and the Buckeyes will lose. Well, before that opening game against Penn State, drum major Dwight Hudson dropped the baton on that goal post throw. It was the first drop in a long, long time, the first many could remember. We hadn't even kicked off and an ill wind was blowing. Of course, we were shut out that first game, losing 19-0 to Penn State, with Art Schlichter throwing five interceptions!

It got worse when we tied Southern Methodist in the fourth game, and then later were upset 27-16 at Purdue. Going into the rivalry with the School Up North, the Buckeyes were only ranked sixteenth in the polls. Still, we went into the Michigan game tied for the conference lead. Of course, the winner of that game would go to the Rose Bowl. But we lost 14-3 in our own stadium. The second half we made only one first down, unheard of for an Ohio State offense. On top of that, a Michigan State victory that day enabled the Spartans to share a piece of the conference championship that we didn't win. It was the first time in eleven years that a team other than Ohio State or Michigan had won the Big Ten.

The Gator Bowl game against Clemson was viewed somewhat as a consolation prize to a disappointing season. At that time, the line of thinking was, "If it wasn't the Rose Bowl, it wasn't really a bowl." Prior to then, Ohio State had only played a total of twelve bowl games, going clear back to 1921 (amazing statistic, isn't it)! Ten of those bowls were the Rose Bowl, one the Orange, and the twelfth was the Sugar. We had never played anything but a major bowl, and I don't think our guys were gung ho about playing the game in Jacksonville.

Still, it was the Atlantic Coast Conference against the Big Ten. We had a young, first-rate quarterback, Art Schlichter, who had started all the games that year as a freshman. Ohio State had a stable team, a seasoned team, and it was supposed to be a good game. Though our guys were not gung ho, we played Clemson, and we played them pretty well. Of course, everyone gets up for Ohio State, because if you beat Ohio State, it will make your year. Clemson was out to build their program and get national recognition, so it was a good game. I am not trying to take anything away from Clemson.

Drip, Drip, Drip: Coach Hayes was a little edgy that week, especially during those last few days. He was a diabetic and his sugar was beginning to act up on him. As the game went along, we fell behind. But in the fourth quarter, with about four minutes left in the game, we recovered a Clemson fumble at our own 24-yard line. We were behind 17-15, but we were driving and we advanced the ball down into Clemson territory. With two minutes to go, we were close to field goal range. Art was throwing the ball, and we were running the ball pretty well. The coaches upstairs in the press box wanted us to throw a certain pass, but Coach Hayes didn't want to throw it.

Woody had certain things he didn't like. He didn't like the counter dive, because if you ran the counter dive, it opened up an opportunity for a linebacker to put his hat on the ball and cause the tailback to fumble. He had experienced fumbles several times, so we didn't run the counter dive. It had been a good play for us at Nebraska, but Coach Hayes wouldn't run it at Ohio State. You know how he hated fumbles.

Woody also had a certain pass play he particularly disliked. In the weeks leading up to this game, the coaches had wanted to throw this pass, but Woody didn't want to call it. We had practiced it, and it was a good play at times, but it was also a play where there was a big opportunity for bad things to happen. There was a high probability of an interception. Naturally, Coach didn't like this play either. But as the game progressed that evening, the coaches wanted to run this pass play. The guys up in the box kept on Woody to call this play. They kept telling him from the press box, "We got this, we got this! This is *the play*!" This had gone on the series before, and Woody wouldn't run it. Finally, with about two minutes in the game, and a third and five at the Clemson 24-yard line, Woody relented. He finally gave in. Woody let them call the play that he didn't like. We were real close to field goal range, and a field goal would have put us up, but the coaches up in the box had convinced Woody to throw this pass. They had given him what I call the water torture treatment; you know you just keep beating them, beating them, drip, drip, drip. If you just keep dropping a drop of water on a rock, pretty soon you'll get a hole. They gave Woody the water torture treatment, and finally, he gave in. Then the exact thing happened that Woody had seen so many times on film; the exact thing that he was worried about happening did. The ball was intercepted.

The Punch: When Charlie Bauman intercepted the ball, he ran toward our sideline. I was standing right next to Woody when it happened. Of course, Coach Hayes, as everyone knows, was so frustrated he just jumped on

the guy. He punched him. I was right next to Woody, closer than anyone, so I saw it all. First hand. Coach would have jumped on anyone that had been there. It didn't matter who it was. If it had been one of our coaches, he would have jumped on him. It could have been a referee or equipment manager. It could have been the water boy. It could have been anyone. It just so happened it was Charlie Bauman, the Clemson player who intercepted the pass.

Some fans have claimed that the Clemson player held the ball out or taunted Coach. I don't remember that, or remember seeing that. But I can understand, if it had been one of our guys making that interception, how they might have been excited, jumping around instinctively and celebrating. I don't know that he taunted Coach. I think he was going to "get it," regardless!

It had little to do with Charlie Bauman intercepting the pass, holding the ball out, or taunting him or anything like that. He was just the closest person to Woody and the one to incur his wrath. Charlie did *what Coach knew was going to happen*. Woody had let them call this play and worse, had done it against his own better judgment. Woody was mad at *himself*, enraged because he was supposed to be the boss and he didn't follow his own instructions. He was as angry with himself as he was at anybody else, because he had the authority to say *no*, and he had said *no* so many times, but that very last time he gave in. In Woody's own mind, he was weak. He had failed. It wasn't our quarterback that had failed. In Woody's mind, Woody Hayes failed. At that instant, if there had been a full-length mirror in front of Coach Hayes, he would have punched himself in his own mouth!

Woody had been fighting other battles too during that game. Earlier in the year, the defense didn't have all their slots filled on a trip, and Coach tried to get them to take a certain guy to a game. The defensive coaches were not going to take him, so we took him on offense, even though he was a nose guard. This guy was just killing us in practice as a scout teamer, and we knew he could be a football player. Well, in this Gator Bowl game, Woody had been fighting the same battle of trying to get this same kid in at nose guard. The kid had been stopping all the Ohio State plays in practice, but the coaches didn't want to play him. Woody finally made them put that kid in the game, and when they did, the kid probably made six plays out of the next nine or ten. Because of that, Woody was angry with the coaches in the box to start with, even before the interception ever happened.

I was standing right beside Woody when Bauman intercepted the ball and came over and Coach hit him. If you look at the rerun of the TV broadcast, there I am next to Woody. I just hunched my shoulders and dropped them in anguish. "He didn't do this," I thought. "Tell me this didn't happen. Tell me this isn't real. I can't believe it." I knew right then. "We're through," I said to myself. "I know right now we're going to get fired," I said. "You can't do this. We're done!" I knew right then that we were finished as a coaching staff.

Of course, after the interception, Clemson ran the clock out. It was a surreal finish. We had just lost the game, and I remember Todd Bell walking up the tunnel with me to the locker room. Todd kept saying, "We won the game. We won the game, didn't we, Coach?"

"Todd," I said, "quit trying to be funny, Todd, quit clowning around. We got beat." Of course, with what had happened, I was in no mood for joking.

"We won, didn't we, Coach?" Todd said.

"Todd, we lost," I told him.

"We lost?"

"Yes, Todd, we lost," I said. Todd was out of it. I don't even think he played the last quarter. I didn't know it then, but Todd Bell actually had his own bell rung sometime during the game, and he didn't even realize the game was over. He thought it was halftime. Finally, I convinced Todd it was over, and we had lost.

When we got inside, Coach talked to the team for a little while, and that was it. We took turns staying in the locker room with the coach who coached the position where Woody had wanted to put the middle guard in, until that coach got dressed and got out. Coach sat there and kept eyeing him, so we made sure someone stayed with that guy. We knew Woody's frame of mind, so we made it a point to take turns staying there.

After the game, the team left for the hotel, but Woody just sat there in the locker room. Woody didn't even go to the press conference. George Hill did the press conference for him. In his book, *Woody Hayes: A Reflection, Dispatch* sportswriter Paul Hornung wrote that Woody eventually sent for him. Paul wrote that the two old friends spent thirty minutes in a dingy cubicle, with Woody alternating between anger and depression. The bond between those two was so deep that when Paul later discovered he had inadvertently left his recorder running, he wrote, "I listened to only a portion of it and have never played it since." I have often wondered, in today's media culture, would any reporter have the decency to bury that tape? Paul Hornung did.

Eventually the two left the Stadium and in his book, Paul Hornung painted the sad scene of that departure:

> Only half a dozen fans were still around, hardly noticing as the 65-year old, gray-haired man walked slowly, head down, to a waiting automobile. It was one of the saddest moments of my life—and his. As I feared, I was watching not only the end of a great career, but the end of a glorious era in Ohio State football.

Our team doctors would tell us later that Woody's sugar was so bad that night his urine was like syrup. It was that thick. They were not the only ones who thought sugar was a factor. Bo Schembechler too told Paul Hornung:

> I wasn't there, but I'm convinced this is what happened: He had had a long, trying season, we'd beaten him, he was in the throes of the final game, he was tired, he'd neglected his medicine, and his blood sugar was out of whack.

The Firing: Regardless of why it happened, I knew what was to come. It was confirmed later that night when Hugh Hindman told me, "I just fired Woody." I told Lorita that when I got back to the hotel room. It was late and we went to bed. You might think we didn't sleep much that night, and it

wasn't easy for us. Yet I drew on my faith, and Lorita did likewise. Her account of that night may surprise you:

> The toughest time in all of Bill's coaching was when Woody was released. Like most of the people in the stadium, I did not see the incident happen. There was no replay screen then. It wasn't until I met Bill after the game that I found out what had happened. Later we were up in the hospitality room and I heard one of the administrators talking to someone. He said, "Don't say anything about this to anyone else." I asked Bill about that, and he answered that they were probably telling the person that they were going to relieve Woody of his responsibilities. That night I called my parents and my sister-in-law Gloria and told them we were going to be okay.
>
> You might think that was a rough night for us. However, Bill is very good at dealing with negativity. He has never worn his feelings on his sleeve, and he handles difficult situations admirably. There have been times I've said to him, "Why aren't you angry?" He always had a saying that he shared with me, "And this too shall pass." Bill's attitude was always "it can be wonderful and you win all these things, but remember it is only for the moment." After games, the next morning Bill was always in there looking at the next film. He had a saying: "It's never as good as you think it is, and it's never as bad as you think it is." We needed that faith that night.
>
> I had watched Bill coaching clear back in high school. He was always squatting on the sidelines, pulling out grass as he watched the game. You never saw him yelling and screaming at his players. I asked him one night why he was never yelling and screaming, and he said to me, "Somebody has to be thinking about the next play. You can't do that if you're jumping around and yelling."
>
> Of course, we knew that night we were facing Bill losing his job and having to move. I'm sure Bill was already thinking about the next play. Weighing in the back of my mind was the thought, "I like the job I have, but I'm going to go wherever my husband goes." Of course, I'm sure in Bill's mind his burden was, "I've got to take care of my family."
>
> But I think Bill also drew on his quiet strength and faith that night in Jacksonville. I slept in Bill's arms that night, and I don't remember him not sleeping. I had heard what was happening, but as we went to bed, we went to sleep that night with the idea, "We're going to make it. We've always made it."

Press Conference Over: The next morning I awoke early. Since I was the person in charge of the buses, I knew I had to do something to help Coach Hayes. I knew the press would be waiting and that it would be a scene. I didn't think Woody or the Ohio State program deserved that, so the next morning I went up to Coach's room to tell him that the reporters were waiting downstairs in the lobby. As you can imagine, there was a horde of sports writers.

Alex Gibbs and I went up to his room together. I swallowed hard, and after we knocked, I said, "Coach, I gotta tell you something."

At first, Woody growled, "What d'ya want?"

He got on my nerves then, he was so short with me. So I said, "Well, never mind." I was ready to leave.

"Come on in," he said.

I stepped in to talk. "I have the buses downstairs," I told Woody. "Coach, the reporters are waiting for you. There is a whole gang of reporters in the lobby, and as you can imagine, it is a feeding frenzy. I have it fixed, though. You give me five minutes to get downstairs and get on the bus. I have the operator on the freight elevator ready to take you downstairs after we are gone. You go down this hallway to that freight elevator, and when you get to the bottom, step out and right into the waiting police car. A police car will be waiting right there at the freight elevator, around the corner from the press, where the buses are. That police car will take you right to the airport and right out to the plane on the runway. I have worked it out where they will let you in on the side of the field, and you can drive right up to the back of the airplane. You give me four minutes from the time I leave this room, and I will go downstairs and get on the bus. We will take off and meet you at the airport."

Now, "thank you" was not in Woody's vocabulary. He had a real hard time saying thanks, so he just put his head down on my shoulder, lightly tapped me a bit with his fist, and said softly, "Thanks." That was Woody's way of saying thank you for what I had done.

When I got down to the lobby, all the reporters were down there. The players were loaded. I went out, got on the bus, and said to the driver, "Let's go, bussy." End of press conference. The press stood there with their mouths open. They didn't see Woody, and they had never seen us leave without Woody. We did that day. We left them standing there with their mouths wide open.

After we arrived at the airport, we loaded the plane and waited for Coach. Soon the police car drove right up to the back of the plane where the tailgate was down. I saw him step out of the police car, take a couple of steps, and walk right up into the airplane. He went right up front, to where he usually sat, and we took off for home. At that point, the players didn't yet know what had happened. Some of the administrative guys in the back knew it. Jim Jones knew, and he had told the assistants that Woody had been relieved of his duties. The head student manager knew it, and he cried the whole flight because he had been with Woody his entire time in college. Some folks knew, but at that point, the players still didn't.

We left Florida around 9 a.m. that morning and arrived in Columbus around noon. It was a long flight. Woody didn't say anything to the team or anyone until just before we landed. Woody got up and grabbed the microphone as he always did, and he told the guys that he wanted them to study real hard over the winter, and not to do anything to embarrass themselves or the University, to come back ready to go next spring, and to remember that they were Ohio State. He had made that same speech probably twenty-seven other times at the end of each season.

Then he said, "Oh, by the way, I won't be your coach next year." That was it. That was the last thing Woody said as football coach of The Ohio State University.

Now, the players didn't take this seriously because Woody talked this way in some of our meetings when he was down, or when we were not practicing well. When he was disappointed with their play he would say, "I'm not going to coach you anymore." The guys thought Woody was just down from this loss, so they were not paying any attention. They just figured that was what it was. Imagine, Woody Hayes was telling the team he had been through the war with that he wouldn't be back next year, or any year, and nobody was reacting to it. Looking back, for me, that was one of the saddest moments of the whole episode.

Of course, when the players got off the plane, the reporters started sticking microphones and cameras in their faces and asking them, "What about Coach Hayes getting fired? What about Coach Hayes quitting? What about Coach Hayes resigning?" These kids did not know what to say. They were dumbfounded. They were shocked.

When we got off the plane, Woody said, "I want all the full-time coaches to meet me at the office in thirty minutes."

We assistants soon gathered in Woody's office at the Biggs Athletic Facility. Woody had us all in there—including his manager, the guy that was always around him—and Woody sat there in silence for the longest time. Woody said to us that he was no longer the coach. Then, finally, he said, "The only thing I'm sorry for is I took eight other good people down with me. That's all I'm sorry for."

That was it. Here was this guy, this coach—this had been his whole life—and it was over. He started cleaning out his office. The manager whom I said was crying started putting Woody's stuff in boxes. And that was it. Twenty-eight seasons as coach of The Ohio State University football team had ended. Not with a bang, but with a whimper.

Knocked Down: For the first time, I saw Coach Hayes in a light that I had never seen him in before. For the time being, he couldn't do one of his favorite things. Woody's favorite saying was, *When you get knocked down, you got to get back up.* He had given that speech a thousand, maybe even ten thousand times during his tenure at Ohio State. Hundreds of Buckeye players had heard it, fans had heard it, alumni had heard it, and they all had been uplifted by it. Everybody had heard it. *When you get knocked down, you got to get back up.* But this time, Coach Hayes was literally the guy that had really been knocked down. This was his knockout. And he couldn't get up. I had seen Woody knocked down before, but he always got up stronger. This time, I wondered, "Can Coach Hayes ever recover from this?"

There have been various accounts of what happened at the end. Some have said Woody was fired. Some said he resigned. Some said he should have been given the chance to resign and wasn't. Some say Hugh Hindman asked Coach to resign, but he wouldn't. I do know that Paul Hornung wrote in *Woody Hayes: A Reflection* that Coach Hayes called him early that next morning after reconsidering what he had told Hugh Hindman; and in the first versions of the Columbus paper the next day, Paul wrote that Woody had retired. I go along with what Paul said. But the University held a press conference at 9:30 that same morning, and announced Woody had been fired. And later

editions of the paper were changed to reflect that. At this point in history it is long over and done, so all that really doesn't matter.

It had to be the hardest thing for Hugh Hindman. Woody had brought Hugh to Ohio State, and Hugh had been one of Woody's assistant coaches. Hugh was a good coach. He coached Rufus Mayes and Dave Foley, the two great tackles on Woody's '68 national championship team. Hugh was very helpful to me. But there he was that night, charged with dispatching his old boss. I know whatever happened, it had to be tough for Hugh to go into the locker room, or Woody's room that night, or the next morning, wherever and whenever he actually had that conversation.

Some have asked how many more years Woody had in him if he hadn't done that at the Gator Bowl. I don't know. He had talked about retiring, but I don't think he would have. When he was angry at times, he would say he was going to keep the job until August 1st, and then one of his assistants could get the job because it would be too late to bring in someone from the outside. He always said he was going to do it that way, so they would have to give it to one of his assistants. Woody was always looking out for his people.

Woody holed up in his house after that. He wouldn't come out, wouldn't talk to anybody for the longest time. Woody had still not talked to the press since the incident had happened. Finally, Archie went to see him. I think Archie was the first person to go see him. I went to see him from time to time. The first time I went to see him, it was difficult. I let him lead the conversation to set the boundaries for things he did or didn't want to talk about. We talked about old times. He said he was sorry for costing us our jobs, but he wasn't sorry for anything else.

A couple of weeks later, Woody made a trip up to Bowling Green to see Bo Schembechler and Doyt Perry. He talked with those guys, and Bo later said that during their meeting he tried and tried to get Woody to apologize. Woody reportedly told him, "I'm not going to. Should I apologize for all the good things I've done?"

I don't think it was ever in Woody's nature to apologize. I had an incident with him one time, where we got into a little something, and he wanted to apologize sometime when we were in the restroom. He reached over to shake hands and say he was sorry.

"I can't accept that, Coach," I told him.

"Why?" he asked.

"It didn't happen in here just between us two, Coach. It happened in front of the rest of the coaches." Well, he went to his grave and he never did apologize in front of anyone else! In one sense he did apologize, but I can't really say I got an apology from him, because he didn't do it in front of everyone else who had witnessed what he did. That was Woody.

It's ironic. The guy who lived a straight life, was so magnanimous with people, did so much for people and had so many marvelous traits, had that flaw that made it hard for him to apologize. He believed in his things so hard, believed that what he was doing was right and that everybody else was wrong. He wasn't conceited or thought he was above you. It's just that he believed so strong in what he believed in. It is like what I have said about standing in the tunnel with him. They would be booing him and he would say, "What a

great feeling! A hundred-thousand people here and you're the only SOB that's right." I mean, he enjoyed that! He thought he was right all the time. So in his mind, what did he have to apologize for?

He was right, in his mind. He was right, that we shouldn't have thrown that pass. He didn't have anything against the kid that intercepted that, because he figured that would happen long before it did happen. He figured before we threw it, that was what we were putting ourselves into. *"I was right, and my lieutenants goofed me up!"* In his mind, he was right, so why apologize? And Woody never did apologize for striking Charlie Bauman.

Despite his inability to apologize, there was one thing Woody would do. Woody always took the blame for us with the press. When we would lose a game, he would say to the press that it was his fault that he got out-coached. He took that. He took the blame, even if the assistants had screwed up. He didn't take the blame when we got in our meetings, though. When we got into our meetings, it wasn't exactly his fault. It was our fault. *That's why I'm the head coach and you're the assistant!* I heard that on many occasions. Those were spirited discussions, but you were in a select group. Even so, you knew where this guy was coming from all the time. He was true to himself. He was coming this way and you had no doubt about it. Even though he never apologized, Woody took the blame for what happened in Jacksonville. I never once heard Woody complain about the assistants that had talked him into calling that play.

Getting Back Up: It took Woody a while, but when he finally came back out, he came out strong like the Woody Hayes I knew. Woody's first public appearance came three weeks after his firing, at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon. It took three weeks, but Woody did what I earlier had doubted he could do. I had seen Woody knocked down before, but he always got up stronger. But this time I really wondered, "Can Coach Hayes recover? Can he get back up?"

Well, Woody did get back up, and he did it that day at the Chamber luncheon. It was probably the most anticipated speech in Ohio State University history, because beforehand no one had any clue what Woody was going to say. Legend has it that high-ranking University administrators were in their offices apprehensively listening to the speech on the radio. Hayes' speech was recorded and printed. It is reprinted here by permission of Steve Hayes, Woody's son and the courtesy of OSU Fan, Brandon Heipp, who has the transcription of the speech. While not verified to be 100 percent accurate, this transcription is believed to be a faithful rendition of Coach Hayes' speech:

> *Thank you friends. You know on the way down here I was doing just a little bit of reminiscing . . . You know when I felt bad about this incident, and got to reflecting, I thought of a night over New York City not very long ago at the Hall of Fame where I saw a man in his eighties [John Galbreath] bouncing around over there, two days after he'd lost the opportunity to get Pete Rose* [as a free agent]. *And that man has the greatest resilience of any man I've ever known. And then I started saying "What the devil you feel-*

ing sorry for yourself about it? You've gotta get up and go once more." John [Galbreath], I'm honored to have you here today.

The incident down at Jacksonville was the matter of an instant. It was my attitude not to apologize, because I don't apologize for anything. When I make a mistake, I take the blame for it and go on from there. I've seen too many people who quickly apologize and sort of cop out. And I just don't think there are easy ways out of anything like that. And yet, the thing that makes me apologize is this: I feel very, very sorry for it because of the wonderful people it's affected: my coaches, our football players—I miss them very much, my contact with them, I miss that . . . I hope they do too; I have a feeling that they do, because we have always had close contact with the football players. And when I made up my mind to apologize, it was through the offices of men like Archie Griffin and Daryl Sanders in particular.

Let's come a little bit closer to the university. I've mentioned this before, and I like to mention it outside the state of Ohio. The big four in our athletics, in professional sports. The sportsmen of the year, who is he? Jack Nicklaus. Jack Nicklaus, from The Ohio State University and educated right here in Columbus, Ohio. Who's the next one? What man had the greatest ovation when he retired a year ago? And he reminded me of what Cy Young had said fifty-five to sixty years ago back in Newcomerstown, and what he would tell us about Boston when he pitched in Boston; he said "I love Boston." And this man said the same thing when he retired, he said, "Boston, I love you." And who was that? John Havlicek, he is Mr. Basketball. And then you go to football, the only two-time Heisman award winner, who off that field, that's the only time he's greater than when he's on the field. The greatest American athlete there's been—am I biased? Sure I'm biased, because I coached him. I know what kind of a person he is, I've never met a finer person than Archie Griffin. And then the man who's better then any of them, better then any, because he is the man as a sharecropper came to Cleveland, then to Ohio State, the greatest track man who ever lived: Jesse Owens, from The Ohio State University.

No one, no university, can even come close to those athletes. Sure, you can brag about our football, you could brag about the All-Americans we've had, all of those things. We take those too much for granted, perhaps. But those are the things that we're proud of here.

This new organization needs all the help they can get. Newspaper, radio, television, every honorable way you can help. Now later on, I can't tell you not to take potshots, you will. But for heavens' sake, get on the bandwagon now! I'm saying that, I'm giving you advice, because they need it now. Not later, but now, because you always need good athletes.

How good a coach is Coach Bruce? He's a great coach. Am I qualified to say? Yes, I know. He coached with us for seven years. He's honorable, he's smart, he's tenacious, he'll work, he'll get the job done—you can be sure of that. Will he make mistakes? Who doesn't? We all make mistakes; sure, he's not perfect, but he's a mighty fine coach and man, you'll be proud of him. My guess is he'll improve on the record that's been established in the last twenty-eight years, excepting one thing he won't do: my guess is he will not last as long as the previous incumbent.

Do I carry bitterness toward the organization? No, I carry bitterness towards me because we got that game, we got beaten down there when I thought we were going to win. And nobody in this world despises to lose like I do. No one in this world. It's been a failing of mine. It's gotten me into trouble more than once. But it's also taken a man with mediocre ability and made a pretty good coach out of him. Because I despise to lose.

How about my attitude toward this university? I've given this university about everything I had, and for me to be bitter, I'm bitter at losing because I thought we had that darn thing coming our way. I'm bitter at losing, and in the last two years I've felt we've lost games where my luck isn't what it used to be, because I've always believed in Woody's luck. And that one we lost against Oklahoma, nothing ever hurt me more than that, because we had that darn thing won, when I lose a ballgame like that, I'm the stupidest coach that ever lived. I am the stupidest coach that ever lived when I blow one like that. Um-hmm. And we haven't won some of those close ones, so I paid for it. I paid for it. But I'll never take it out on this university because I love it too much.

I don't know whether I can come to football games; I know I couldn't sit still anywhere, I know that. I know that. As a matter of fact, a couple of weeks ago, and I've talked too long, we'll wind it up now. I got a call from a fella who said, "I'm gonna fly down", and I said, "Well you better not try, I'll meet you halfway, up at Doyt's house." "No," he said, "I'll fly down." Well, he's stubborn, he always thinks left-handed—his name's Bo Schembechler. And so I said, "Alright, come ahead and fly down." But of course he never made it; the weather (socked?) in, and so I met him and Doyt, him and Doyt up in Bowling Green, and we spent, Doyt Perry, great friend of both of us (we had all coached together at one time), and we met up there and talked the entire Sunday afternoon. And when we got done, Bo was the one who said, "Woody, you ought to apologize." Well, of course, I'm just as stubborn as Bo is. But . . . now, confidentially, I like the man.

. . . I think it was President Buchanan who said that when he was young he wanted to be President, so that he could reward his friends and punish his enemies. But he said by the time he became President, most of his friends were gone and he found that his enemies were pretty good people after all. And you know, as I grow older, I have a difficult time ever disliking anyone. Unless it's on a matter of principles or something like that. But, I do like Bo, but you don't dare to. But I find there are so many, many great people in this world. The hundreds and hundreds, and literally thousands of letters that we received, that we can't get to the opening of them yet. And so many people. Am I bitter? Yeah, losing the darn ballgame, yeah, and I'll stay that way forever, because I felt we could win it. I thought we played good enough in that game to win, and we were the underdog and I loved it when we were underdogs, but we didn't. But bitterness? No. I got what was coming to me; let's just let it go that way, and let's just have good thoughts for everybody at that university, and I said everybody.

"And in the night of death," as Ingersoll said, "hope sees a star, and listening love hears the rustle of a wing."

The Sequel: That was how Woody Hayes got up when he was knocked down, and that was the Woody I knew, worked for, and respected. In the years that followed, Woody became a traveling ambassador for the University. Woody did it all. Speech giver. Fund raiser. Promoter. On March 14, 1986, slightly less than a year before his death, Woody spoke at the Ohio State Commencement, opening his speech with, *"Today is the greatest day of my life."* The man who had coached Jim Parker and Archie Griffin, the football coach who had won five national championships, in the twilight of his years called speaking at commencement at the University that fired him *"the greatest day of my life."*

On March 12, 1987, I was in Atlanta with the basketball team when Coach died. They called me and naturally I was sorry to hear it. I had kept in touch over the years and would go over to visit with him at his office in the ROTC building, and other times I went to his house. I remember going over to his house one time to see if we could help get Archie in the athletic department. And I remember Archie and me going over to his house to get his approval to name the building the Woody Hayes Athletic Center. Woody didn't want that. He didn't think they should be spending all that money on a building like that. We told him that if he let us use his name, the athletic department could get a whole lot more funding for it, and right quick. Finally he agreed. But he didn't like it. "Buildings don't make great football teams," he told us, "you have to get out there and outwork the other people."

I sat up front at Woody's memorial service in the church in Upper Arlington. I got to shake hands with President Nixon, who gave the eulogy. I also attended his public service in the Stadium, where I remember Rex Kern and Bo speaking. It was a very moving and fitting tribute. Woody was laid to rest in Union Cemetery, on Olentangy River Road, within sight of the Ohio Stadium he loved and dedicated his life to. The tombstone of the man who loved history carries not his records, not his national championships, but rather is engraved with a simple quote of nineteenth century orator Robert Ingersoll. It is the same quote that Woody closed that commencement speech with. *And in the night of death, hope sees a star, and listening love hears the rustle of a wing.*

Woody was, if anything, loyal—loyal to the people that worked with him, for him, and played for him. And to the very end, he remained loyal to the university that fired him. Woody Hayes was a good soldier.

I conclude this chapter where I started. They broke the mold when they made Wayne Woodrow Hayes.

Chapter 20

I OWE EARLE

"The only thing I'm sorry for is I took eight other good people down with me," Coach Hayes said. He did. A new coach was coming in and we assistants were expecting a housecleaning. We were out there exposed like a big, bulky linebacker trying to stay with a wide receiver running a post pattern. As tough as the Gator Bowl incident was on Woody, it was also tough on the assistant coaches and their families in the days following the bowl game, and in the limbo between Woody and the new coach. You can imagine what it was like for me, but you probably haven't thought about how it affected the wives and children. Lorita will share what it was like to have gone through that:

> We had gone to Jacksonville on two different planes, and we left later in the afternoon than the team did, so the wives had to sit around all day knowing that their husbands no longer had jobs. The coaching wives were close and so were their children, so flying back was a devastating time. It was a cold, rainy and windy day, and when the plane came down out of the clouds to land at the Columbus Airport, we were lined up with the freeway instead of the runway. The pilot pulled it back up and we went around. We did that twice. The third time, they decided if we tried one more time and didn't make it, they didn't have enough fuel, so they sent us to Pittsburgh where the weather was better.
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> After we landed in Pittsburgh, we waited to be bussed back to Columbus. There we all were, sitting in that airport. Anne Hayes was sitting across from us. Then there were the administrators who we thought were responsible for the firing. And the coaches' wives. It was awkward. We sat there for several hours, and while we were sitting there, all during the NFL games, they would replay the interception and Woody's reaction. They would show it in slow motion. And then again. And then reverse it. It kept going back and forth. No matter where we turned, it was on a TV. We just dealt with it. I didn't fall apart, nor did anyone else. I felt so sorry though for Anne Hayes, for her having to sit through that with all of us. Finally, they bussed us back to Columbus. I remember Debbie asking me on the bus ride, "Mommy, how much do you make?"
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> "About enough to take care of the house payment," I said, "but Debbie, if there's any way we can keep you here at Ohio State, we will

do that." She was a junior at Ohio State and knew what the out-of-state tuition would be. Of course, I didn't tell her, but in my mind, I was running through the scenarios of how in the world we could do that.

In the interim period, the coaches were still going out recruiting until they had a new coach. It seemed like forever. My friends at my work would ask, "Has Lorita heard anything yet?" It was several weeks before they finally hired Earle Bruce. I was over at OSU with a friend the morning Bill was meeting with Earle. Finally, Bill called. "Lorita," he said, "Earle's going to keep me!"

"I'm so happy for you," I answered, and then I said, "I'm so happy for us." Prayers had been answered! For the first time in the whole ordeal, tears rolled down my face. You just come to be strong and meet whatever you have to deal with. That's what we did.

Earle Arrives: My relationship with Earle Bruce started while I was at Nebraska. Earle was the head coach at Iowa State then, and that game was sort of a gimme for Nebraska. Iowa State hadn't beaten Nebraska in many years and was in the single digits in lifetime wins against the Huskers. The 1976 season, though, was different. Nebraska went to Ames to play the Cyclones on their home turf. When we came into their stadium on Friday for our walk-through, Earle was walking around with this chip on his shoulder. They were leaving as we were coming in, and he had this big chip sitting right there for us to see. He was going to beat us! And he did! When Iowa State beat us that next day, it was a huge win for them and for Earle Bruce. Not only did he beat us that day, he turned around and beat Nebraska the next year too, after I was gone.

Earle was a good high school athlete from Maryland. He was a sprinter and league champion in the 100-yard dash at that time. He came to Ohio State to play football and was a freshman at that 1950 Snow Bowl game. In 1951, Earle tore his meniscus before he could ever play a varsity game. In typical Woody fashion, Woody Hayes asked Earle to help coach, and Earle coached the Buckeyes until he graduated in 1953. In 1953, Earle went to Mansfield to be an assistant football coach, moving to head positions at Salem, Sandusky, and then Massillon.

Earle knew football and went 82-12-3 in ten seasons of high school coaching. Earle won at Salem, won at Sandusky, and never lost a game at Massillon in the two years he was there. Everyone thinks Paul Brown was Massillon's best head coach, but Earle was the only undefeated and untied coach in Massillon history. Earle had a good record down in Tampa. He won at Iowa State. He knew football inside and out. And he was an Ohio guy who had coached under Woody. At the time OSU hired him, Earle had every pedigree that you would look for in a football coach. Earle Bruce was a competitive guy. He loved football. He loved Ohio State. He was a good judge of talent. Earle had a lot of thoughts about football strategy, a lot of coaching principles in his mind, and he followed them. Earle had a chip on his shoulder much of the time, which made him very competitive, but then you have to be competitive to coach at the Ohio State level.

To this day, I am grateful that Earle kept me when Woody was fired. He kept me and I owe Earle Bruce for that. He kept only two, and fortunately, I was one. It was pins and needles for some of the assistants until they learned their fate. But for me, I wouldn't say it was quite that way. After Woody was let go, I went to the coaches' convention in California, where Frank Kush, the 22-year head coach at Arizona State, asked me if I had anything. I had met Frank at a clinic way back when I was at Southeast High School. I advised Frank that I didn't, and he told me, "Keep me in mind." As I have mentioned, I have the thing called *place*, and I really wasn't that shaken up. So what if I didn't stay at Ohio State. *The place you seek is seeking you* and I really believed that. Of course, knowing that coaches like Frank might be interested in me sure helped.

The week after the coaches' convention, Earle was hired. He came to Columbus, and that same weekend, we had our recruits on campus. All of Woody's assistants recruited hard that weekend. Then, Sunday night, we were sitting in the office, and Earle told the assistants he would talk to them after the recruits left. One by one, each assistant coach went in alone for his talk with Earle. Some would come back and immediately start cleaning out their desks. Right then they packed up their belongings. That was hard to watch—I mean I had been through war with these guys. The other guys were going in one at a time, but I was sitting there, kind of waiting and waiting, because I didn't want to go in there first. It was tough.

Eventually it came my time. We were doing our own appointments and nobody else went up, so I went in and talked with Earle. When I finally went in, it wasn't a long conversation. Earle and I talked a little bit, and he asked me a couple of questions that I answered. Then he asked, "What are you doing tomorrow for lunch?"

"Nothing," I answered.

"Let's have lunch," he continued. "Where do you want to go?" I told him about a place in Upper Arlington called the Black Horse, a place away from the limelight. I didn't know for sure, but Earle said he was thinking of keeping me.

I didn't really have enough guts to go back to the office and see the remaining guys who still had to go in to see Earle, still had to face the music. Other guys had been coming back and packing up, and when you had been working with these guys for two years and they were leaving—well that was a real tough situation. I didn't want those other guys to see me not packing up, so I turned and went out the other way and down the stairs and out of the building.

The next day I picked Earle up and we went to the Black Horse. We talked about a few plays and things like that while we ate. He asked me a few questions, we talked about some line play, and then he told me that he was going to keep me. When we were done, we shook hands and I was hired. That was it. That was all there was to it. I still had a job. I made the phone call that Lorita told you about and I moved on from Woody Hayes to working hard for Earle Bruce. Earle also kept Glen Mason, who had worked for him at Iowa State. I think he was going to keep George Chaump too, but Chaump went on to the pros. Chaump and Earle were close, because Earle had done a great

recruiting job for Woody, bringing in Jan White and all those guys from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania when Chaump coached there.

As it turned out, *Place* was definitely at work when Earle kept me. Had I gone to Arizona State, I would have soon been looking again. Just ten months after Frank Kush told me to keep him in mind, he was fired. One of Frank's players had filed a lawsuit against the university, alleging that Kush had punched and harassed him. Things turned ugly, and the university fired Frank Kush midseason, just three hours before a home game. Arizona State upset the sixth-ranked Washington Huskies that game, and Frank Kush was carried off the field by his players. Kush was found not liable in the lawsuit, but by then he had moved on to professional coaching. Sixteen years later Frank would be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame, and the next year Arizona State named the field at Sun Devil Stadium in his honor. Frank would later go to work at Arizona State again, this time as a fundraiser in the athletic department. It is quite a story, in some ways similar to Woody's, and to think I might have been caught up in it a second time. Instead, Earle kept me, and seven years later, because I was still at Ohio State, my own life would take yet another different turn. *The place you seek is seeking you.*

Earle brought most of his staff from Iowa State. He also brought Denny Fryzel from Tampa. There were some great coaches on that first staff, coaches that have gone on to do great things. Nick Saban was one of the guys on that staff. Bob Tucker was on that staff and later became a head coach. Of course, Glen Mason later became Minnesota's head coach. We had Fred Zechman, Art Schlichter's high school coach, who came in to coach our quarterbacks and went on to become a head coach at New Mexico State. Earle had some guys that worked hard. He worked hard. After all, we were The Ohio State University and Earle was following a legend.

Earle's First Year: When Earle came to Columbus, he played golf and did some socializing that Woody didn't have the time or interest to do. Earle's dilemma was the same problem that anyone would have had. Earle was following a tough act in following a legend. This was the second time I had been in that role, been with a guy following a legend. Seems I was destined for that. Tom Osborne followed Bob Devaney and then Earle Bruce followed Woody.

Earle was surprised at some of the athletes he found here—or rather didn't find here. I too was surprised when I got here. When Woody brought me out to recruit me, he had a couple of the big tackles come by the office. He had Joe Robinson show me his legs. He showed me Chris Ward, who had just been an All-American. Jimmy Moore came by. Jimmy was a tight end, and at six-foot-five and 265 pounds, he could run under 5.0 in the 40. As Woody was talking to me, I was looking at these guys and thinking, boy, they have guys here that we don't have at Nebraska. Then after I got here, I was thinking Woody might have had the best ones hidden just outside the door and told them to stroll by as we were talking. Earle had the same reaction. The cupboard wasn't bare, but Earle came in expecting to have more than he did.

We had a great season Earle's first year. We went 11-0 and then lost to USC in the Rose Bowl. We were one win away from a national championship Earle's first year in Columbus. People forget that Earle did that. Earle deserves

credit. He did a tremendous job that first year and he was named 1979 College Football Coach of the Year.

A Hundred Million People: I told you the "tunnel tales" about Woody up at the Big House. Earle has one too. During Earle's first year, we were undefeated when we went up for his debut at Michigan, and we were playing for the Big Ten championship, a Rose Bowl berth, and a shot at the national championship. How's that for pressure in your first trip into Ann Arbor? Earle was standing there in that same Michigan Stadium tunnel, but it was not like with Woody. There was no pride in being booed. We were waiting to take the field, and Earle was nervous as all get out. We were standing there in the tunnel, waiting to go out, and he was prancing, throwing his hands in the air, getting all red in the face, hyperventilating, and all that goes with that. I tried the best I could to calm him down. I was standing next to him, on his left, and thought I should try to get the head coach to relax.

"Take it easy, Coach," I said to Earle. "There are a hundred million people in this world that don't even know this thing is happening. It can't be that big of a deal." That was a way I used to relax myself.

"Yeah, that's right," Earle said. "Uh huh, uh huh."

And then, just to pull his chain, I said, "But Coach, there are also fifteen million in Ohio that do, and they are the only ones that count." I was relaxing myself, but I was really trying to relax Earle. Earle did a lot for us in game situations. Earle Bruce was a good game day coach. I wanted him to be able to be at his best that day, so I yanked his chain to lighten things up. It worked. Earle was at his best that day. There were not many days Earle was not at his best because he really loved football, but that day in 1979, Earle Bruce was at his very best. We beat the Wolves 18-15 in a game that propelled us to the Rose Bowl and a chance to play for a national championship.

Tired of Hearing It: Ohio State-USC is another rivalry. We went into the 1980 Rose Bowl undefeated and ranked number one in the country, facing number three Southern Cal. We didn't have great talent that year, but we seemed to get more out of that group than we did some of the other teams that had more talent. There were some guys on that team that probably couldn't have started on some of Earle's other teams, but that team really was together. I am not saying that Woody left the cupboard bare because he didn't, but Earle got the most out of that group.

That year USC had the best football team that I had ever seen. They were better than the best Oklahoma team I ever saw. That '79 USC team was just a great team, and I have to say, the greatest team I ever coached against. They had—I don't know how many—first-round NFL draft picks on that one team. Still, it took USC's final drive to beat us, when Charlie White scored the final touchdown to make it 17-16. The play I remember in that game, though, is Ohio State's Todd Bell making a great run, coming from clear across the field, to catch Charlie from behind and make a tackle after he had run fifty-some yards. We made it a game, but that one-point loss to the greatest team I ever faced cost us a national championship. Afterwards, Earle talked all the time about how we should have won that game, how we

had our chances, and we should have beaten that team. I agree we had our chances and we could have won. But over and over, Earle kept saying, "We should have won that game."

One time I just got tired of hearing that. Earle and I were riding up to Toledo when he started in on it. "Earle," I said, "you have talked and talked about that game. I've been thinking for a long time. I've gotta tell you, Earle, that was a whale of a team, and the best team I've ever seen. They played with us. Look at their personnel. They toyed with us. Do you know who they had on that team?"

Earle said, "Who?" in that gruff voice. You know Earle. He could be blunt.

"Earle, both tackles were first-round draft choices. Anthony Munoz went to the Bengals. Keith Van Horne went to the Bears. One guard, Brad Budde, won the Outland and Lombardi Trophies, and was a first-round draft pick of the Kansas City Chiefs. The other guard, Ray Foster, was the first-round draft pick of the Dolphins the next year. The quarterback, Paul MacDonald, played for the Cleveland Browns. The running back was Heisman Trophy winner Charles White, and blocking for him at fullback was Marcus Allen, who two years later would himself win the Heisman.

"And that was just offense," I said to Earle. "Over on defense they had the great corner Ronnie Lott, a number one draft pick of the 49ers. They had linebacker Larry McGrew, a second-round pick of the Patriots. They had Dennis Smith, a first-round pick of the Broncos. It just went on and on. They had wide receivers, they had linebackers, they had linemen—I mean Munoz is in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. And they had a sophomore safety named Joey Browner, who would end his career a four-time All-American. A four-time All-American!

"They toyed with us," I continued. "When they got ready to go down the field on that last drive to win the game, they toyed with us. They cranked it up and said, 'Let's go.' They just went. There was nothing we could do to stop them. Boom. Boom. Boom. It was over." I looked at Earle and told him, "They had all these guys that were All-Americans, guys that were first or second round NFL draft choices. You know who we had? We had Art Schlichter, a first rounder and Todd Bell, who was a second-round pick. That was all we had! And we came within one point of beating them! We were within one point of beating probably the greatest team you and I ever coached against! Earle, look at what we *did* do!"

"I never looked at it that way," Earle said.

To this day Earle feels we should have beaten them. I agree we had our chances and didn't get it done. The way things were, if we could have held them on that last drive, we probably would have won, and won the national championship. We were that close. Oh, so close! Still, Earle was such a competitor, just like all head coaches, that he thought we should have won. And that was what was sticking in his craw. He had never looked at that team as being the kind of team I described, had never looked at what we did do. Man for man, they were the best team I ever coached against. Period. And we were within one point of beating them. Yet at the end of the day, as Dad always said, USC was on the left-hand side of the page! And that was what counted.

Yom Kippur & The Sooners: That USC game wasn't the only big one I coached in under Earle Bruce. In 1983, we went into Norman, Oklahoma, to avenge that last second loss the Sooners had put on us at the Horseshoe in '77, my first year with Woody. The 1983 rematch featured one of the most incredible performances by any player that I ever coached, our tight end John Frank. And to think, because of me, we almost never got that guy. It is a remarkable story, and it sets the stage for the tale about that Oklahoma game.

One of the most erroneous phrases used to describe Ohio State is "a football factory." My hair bristles when I hear that. I know Woody's bristled, Earle's bristled, Cooper's bristled, Coach Tressel's bristled, and today Urban Meyer's bristles whenever someone misinformed says that. John Frank is one good example of why they are dead wrong. John Frank might be the smartest, hardest working player I have ever been around. He knew what he wanted to be. When I would first meet a recruit, I always asked them what they wanted to be. I asked John Frank that, too, the very first day we met. John told me that he wanted to be a doctor, and he was looking for a school where he could do both—play football and become a doctor. He explained he was interested in knowing if he could do that and play football at Ohio State. "Otherwise, Coach, I'm not interested," John said. When you are recruiting for Ohio State, with all that it offers academically, that is music to your ears.

"What have you done in the last few days towards becoming a doctor?" I asked John.

"I just finished reading a book on ears," John told me. "I want to be an eye, ear, nose, and throat specialist." Now you should remember this was a kid still in high school at the time he said that.

"Why do you want to be an eye, ear, nose, and throat specialist?" I inquired.

"All you have to do is learn the head," John told me.

John and I talked. We got close. He decided this was where he was going to come. His first seven quarters here, John Frank never got less than an A in any course. He was that studious and that smart. John never put off anything. He worked on it right now. You would give him something, and it was done. He would come in from a class, and I'd see him next to that wall in the hallway that goes through the Biggs. He would be standing up next to that wall, or maybe have slid down that wall and be sitting on the floor with a book open, reading. Today, John Frank is a surgeon in New York City.

John and I became close because I enjoy coaching people smarter than me. They help you out. You learn from them. Other people might have been afraid of John because he was so smart. He was always asking why. Some coaches that I worked with might say, "Because I told you so." Well, you ought to have a reason for telling a kid to step with their left foot first. Why not step with your right foot first, if I don't have a reason to step with the left? John liked this about me. I changed a couple of techniques because of John Frank. John said, "Well, Coach, if you did it this way, it might be a little easier." I would argue with him, and tell him, hey, this is why. He would say, "Yeah, I can see that."

At times, though, it happened the other way around. A couple or three times, I thought to myself, "Hmm, uh-uh, uh-uh, yeah. I can see your leverage

isn't as good as it would be in that position." I didn't know kinesiology that well, even though I was in there with all those doctors at Drake. I was just trying to be a coach, not a doctor. But John was studying to be a doctor, and he had some things to teach me. We got along that way because I wanted John to be successful as a doctor as well as a player. I think I had a better relation with John because I tried to explain the "why" of things to him. John and I have always been close and remain that to this day. I never knew, though, how that almost never came to be, until I asked John to contribute to my story. When I began to read what John sent us, well, I was shocked—until I read the rest of the story. Here's the story, in John Frank's own words:

> Let me tell you a story that sums up Bill Myles. When I was being recruited by Ohio State, I was one of the top tight ends in the country. I had offers from Southern Cal, Penn State, Notre Dame, Michigan, you name it. When I went to visit Ohio State, I had already been to a number of other schools. I was accustomed to getting wined and dined. That is a heady experience for a 17-year-old student. The colleges would whisk me around to meetings set up with important people on campus. They took me to nice dinners and showed me a nice time because they obviously wanted me.
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> After exploring a number of places, I visited Ohio State. These visits were always hurried. Mom, Dad, and I had driven about three hours from Pittsburgh. I had to do the visits on a weekend, and since I was still working hard in high school, it was tiring. Ohio State was like everyone else. The college put its best foot forward, and showed me everything nice. I went to lunch in the OSU Union with some academic staff members, and because I was interested in going to medical school, we toured that area. I met some of the players. Then they said that I probably should meet Bill Myles, the tight end coach; so they set up a meeting after lunch.
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> I remember it to this day. Sometimes you have impressions that stick, that leave an indelible imprint on your memory. I can remember the exact table in the student union where I sat down with Bill. He came over, sat down, and said, "Hi." I told him it was nice to meet him. But I really didn't know who he was, nor have any preconceived notions. I just respected him and said hello. We shook hands. It was just another meeting in a long series of people I had met. Bill Myles was just another guy.
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> I anticipated Bill telling me what a great opportunity I would have at Ohio State. I was expecting to hear how I would play, that it was the best tradition in the Big Ten, the opportunities for a good education, the opportunity to be the apple of Columbus, and all of those things. That's what they all do, that's their job, that's how they all recruit to get players to their school. It's almost like sitting down in front of a used car salesman, and listening to a car dealer discuss the virtues of their car. That's the game and I anticipated hearing more of that, but I didn't.
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> Bill sat down, said hello, and as I was waiting, he looked me

straight in the eye and said, "John, I'm not convinced that you really have the toughness to make it here at Ohio State."

Wow! I was young and took that personally. I took it as an affront to my character. I was disappointed. I was let down. I really liked Ohio State, and I could list a hundred things that I loved about the place; but his interaction with Bill changed everything! It was unfortunate. I really liked it up to that point. It was the perfect fit. But that one remark changed the mood and tone of my whole visit to Ohio State.

I questioned Bill, "What do you mean?"

"This is a very tough program," he said. I guess he thought I was just the suburban player, maybe just had a silver spoon. I don't know what he saw, but that is what he said to me: "I'm not sure you have the toughness to make it here."

I didn't know what that meant. I was still just a kid. We went home and when national signing day came, I really wanted to go to Ohio State, but I couldn't because Bill Myles was there. It was a dilemma. The deadline came and I just couldn't sign. When I missed signing day, the newspapers called and asked where I would play.

"I don't know," I told them. "Maybe I'll go to the University of Pittsburgh." I thought I was going to go to Ohio State and I didn't tell anybody the reason that I hadn't signed, but I was in a quandary about going there. I knew I would have a chance to play there. Dr. David Schuller, the head of the Otolaryngologist Department, had been great to me. That is what I wanted to study and I thought it was the greatest place in the universe. But there was Bill Myles.

Ohio State kept calling, and finally, Assistant Steve Szabo asked, "What's the problem here?"

"I don't know," I told him, "What's wrong with Bill Myles?"

"Don't you like the University?" Steve asked.

"I love the University," I told him.

"Great," he said. "We'll send you the forms. Sign them and send them back."

"I can't," I told him. "I can't force myself to sign because of Bill Myles. I can't imagine interacting with that man. It's going to be impossible."

He was obviously disappointed. A couple of days later, my phone rang. It was one of the Ohio State players, a guy from Cincinnati by the name of Joe Lukens. This was thirty years ago and I remember it like it was yesterday. The phone rang and this very mature voice said, "Is John there?" I heard what I thought were plates clanking in the background.

"Yes, this is John," I said

"This is Joe Lukens from Ohio State," was all he said.

I knew the name because he was an outstanding freshman athlete, but I didn't know Joe. "Hi, Joe," I answered, "Are you in the kitchen?" I could hear plates clanking. "Where are you?" I asked him.

"No, I'm in the weight room."

He didn't really say hi. There was no small talk. He just said, "I want you to know that Bill Myles is a good guy."

Now my reaction was, first of all, I didn't know Joe. I didn't know him to trust his opinion. Of course, he was going to call me to say that. They wanted me. Did they pay him to call me to say that? Those were all the things running through my mind. So I just said, "Okay, thanks." It was like a two-minute conversation.

Then he said, "Just remember, Bill Myles is a good guy." Then, he hung up.

I thought, *Okay!* But that call made it even worse. I took it as contrived. I thought to myself, *I really want to go to this school, but I can't go there because of this situation.* Of course, I was missing the deadlines and all of a sudden I was going to lose my scholarship because I couldn't make a decision. Finally, I decided to go to Ohio State, in spite of Bill Myles. I just liked so much about Ohio State that I was going to go there regardless of the guy who told me I wasn't tough enough. I was just going to tolerate him. I wasn't going to let him infringe on what I thought was the perfect match for me.

The rest of the story is history. Bill Myles became the most positive influence on my life, in a way I almost cannot put into words. It is one thing to start off from zero and influence somebody, to do something for them, but it is another thing to start off at a negative 100 and make it up. Bill never knew that he had to make up any ground in our relationship. Bill was just the most consistent educator that you could ever imagine. It is the most difficult thing you could ever try to do. I teach young doctors, and I have been through many experiences—in the NFL, as a surgeon, as a parent, and around young people. Bill had a way of being disciplined, but in a fashion that was real, true, and not selfish. He molded and shaped me, and I don't know if the stuff about toughness was a part of that or not because it never seemed to be an issue. It was more about love than it was about anything else. Bill was just an amazing teacher. For four years, and then beyond, I would call on him for guidance because he is just so interested in young people. I have been an NFL player, yet it brings tears to my eyes just to imagine that Bill's art of teaching/coaching is so rare and unique and is diminishing. The value is priceless. Every day that I envision myself helping to educate young people, I am reminded of the integral part that Bill Myles has been in my life. He achieved true hero status in my eyes. When I think back, it is hard to believe that because of him, I almost didn't go to Ohio State.

I never knew that story until now. John Frank never told me. He never said one word about it. I don't even remember saying that. When I asked John was he tough enough, I was probably thinking about the challenge of football and medical school simultaneously. John Frank was tough, though, and he proved that toughness that Saturday on the field during the Buckeye rematch in Norman, Oklahoma. Here is John again, with the rest of the Oklahoma Sooners story:

Bill Myles' approach is hard to put in words. Let me give you an example. On September 17, 1983, we went to Norman, Oklahoma, to play the second ranked Sooners, and to avenge the heartbreaking loss to Oklahoma in the Horseshoe six years prior. My teammates and I weren't around then, yet we knew the agony of that last second loss and the pride riding on a rematch.

I am Jewish and the game was to be played on Yom Kippur, the holiest of Jewish holidays. The holy day is a two-day period of fasting and prayer. In the weeks leading up to that, I had a decision to make about playing the game. It was a very difficult time and a very personal decision. I wrestled with it. Bill was supportive of me, regardless of what others thought I should or should not do. He was supportive despite the pressures being put on him to influence me. He was just unyielding and going to support whatever I decided. He had been through his own personal decisions and made the right choices and was therefore able to be there for others. Ultimately, with my family and with Bill's help, I made the decision to play.

My religion observes this holiday with a two-day fast, so I entered the game not eating or drinking. I remember Bill did the same. That day was unbearably hot. I had not been eating or drinking, yet I was playing in a football game with temperatures on the field surface approaching 135 degrees. We drew first blood when Mike Tomczak threw me a 16-yard touchdown pass. He hit me again to put us up 14-0. From then on, we held on as we traded touchdowns to win that game 24-14. Mike Tomczak threw for 234 yards that day, and the two TD passes I caught.

Despite our domination, that game was a war. Coming back on the bus through the cornfields of Oklahoma after the game, it was like traveling on a battlefield. People were having cramps. Mike Tomzack passed out. We had a supply of soft drinks and Gatorade, and the trainers were sending them back to the people that needed them. Everyone was drinking. Everyone but me and one other person. I remember this like yesterday. We were on the way to the airport, and I was looking out watching the sunset, waiting for the sun to slip below the horizon so I could eat and drink something. And sitting there beside me was Coach Myles, waiting as well in a show of solidarity. If I couldn't eat, Bill wouldn't either. If I couldn't drink, Bill wouldn't either. When the sun finally went down, we took a drink together, celebrating my two touchdowns and our 24-14 Buckeye victory over the number two team in the country. With the nation watching, the '77 loss had been avenged.

Bill has such a strong personal ethic. Whether it was at the chalkboard, talking about X's and O's, talking about the game plan, or before starting our position meetings, every time Bill would challenge us to have "class." What does class mean? There are so many different connotations of that word. Does class mean riches? Does class mean social status? Does it mean well dressed and refined? I didn't see Bill as having any of those. I didn't see Bill driving a fancy car, and I didn't see Bill wearing a three-piece suit. I didn't see Bill coming from aris-

tocracy. But he would always ask us, "Do you have class?" Thirty years later it is still dawning on me what that really means. Self-respect. Commitment to your own personal ideals. That's far beyond that football education. That's a life education. For a young person it's almost something that you can't discover until you have been through that and you have someone like Bill challenging, "Do you have class?" Now I understand it and get the opportunity to instill it in my own son and students that I work with. That's a priceless education.

I started this discussion with this quirky thing about toughness. So much of that defines Bill as a football coach, who really blazed his own trail, not because he shines to be different, but because he lives his life to a higher level than the norm. You think of Bill as a football coach, but the irony is that he really is an educator and a life coach.

Following graduation, I was drafted in the second round by the San Francisco 49ers. My goal was to become a starter. It eluded me for a while, but in my fourth year, I broke the starting lineup. When I finished that fourth year, I was ready to retire because I was really struggling trying to keep my grades up in medical school, which I was going to part-time in the offseason. Pro football was infringing on my ultimate goal, which was to earn my M.D. But I decided to play one more year, and that next year, I caught two passes in our Super Bowl XXIII win.

At that point it was clear to me: I was retiring. It was a surprise to many, including the 49ers. I did it before the draft so I didn't leave them in the lurch. At first, they thought it was a contract negotiation tactic. They didn't believe me. They called people, investigated, and searched to find out what was going on. I never knew it at the time, but I have since learned that Bill Myles personally called the 49ers to explain to them why I was retiring. It seems fitting. The person I initially didn't want to play for, the man who asked if I was tough enough, the lifelong friend who taught me about class, called to tell the NFL that for John Frank, there was more to life than football.

That performance by John Frank, in the face of his religious faith, the heat on that field, and the importance of that game, has to rank as one of the greatest performances I have ever seen. There was no doubt that day; John Frank was tough enough. Because of him and his teammates, after eleven years of frustration I finally got on the left hand side of the page with the Oklahoma Sooners.

I remember the day John was drafted. Other assistants were sometimes on my guys, John Frank and Bill Roberts. Several times, they said there was something wrong with Bill Roberts. "Get Roberts out of the game," they would say. Well, that year Roberts was a first rounder and John Frank was a second rounder in the NFL draft. I had a one and a two. No one else on the staff came close. Bill Roberts went on to play thirteen seasons in the NFL. John Frank played five seasons before retiring and earning his M.D. from Ohio State. John Frank is now a practicing surgeon in New York City. Not bad for someone from a football factory!

The Comeback: I was fortunate to coach in many memorable games under Earle. Besides Oklahoma, there was the 1984 Illinois game in the Horseshoe, a game that has been billed as Ohio State's greatest comeback. This Illinois game was a homecoming to remember, and a comeback that elevated Keith Byars to the star category. Keith had thirty-nine carries that day, 274 yards, and five TDs. At the beginning of that game, though, Keith was in the doghouse, not destined to be the star.

It was a big game to begin with. We went into it ranked eighth in the nation, and 2-1 in the Big Ten. Illinois was 3-1 in the league, so it was a big conference game. For us, it was also big because we had lost the year before over at their house in Champaign, and we were coming off a disappointing loss to Purdue the week before.

Things didn't go any better in the first half against Illinois than they had at Purdue. Illinois scored first, and then scored again after intercepting Mike Tomczak. We were down 17-0 when Keith Byars fumbled on our own 21-yard line, and in six more plays we were down 24-0. We were down twenty-four points and it was just thirteen ticks of the clock into the second quarter! When our guys came to the bench after that fumble, Keith wouldn't look me in the eye. But he kept saying, "I'm going to make up for it, I'm going to make it up."

When you are in a hole, the biggest mistake you can make is trying to get it all back at once. You have to chip away. "If we can just get seven points," I told the guys at that point. "If we can just get seven, we are back in this thing." We finally showed some life and got seven points.

Then I said, "If we can just get fourteen. If we can just get fourteen by half, we're in this."

When we got fourteen, I upped it. "If we can just get seventeen before the half, we can beat these guys," I said to the offense, not knowing we were about to get to twenty-one. But we did. In an incredible comeback, we scored three times in the last four minutes of the half, and went in at halftime only trailing 24-21 in a game many thought we were out of.

On the second half kickoff, William White recovered an Illinois fumble. Four plays and four carries later, Keith Byars scored his third touchdown to give us our first lead that day. It became a game for the ages. We would go on to trade touchdowns until the final seconds of that game.

Even though it was an amazing comeback, most people don't remember the game for that. They don't remember that we were down 24-0. They don't remember three scores in four minutes. They don't remember that after fifty-seven minutes and seventy-six total points, and after more than a thousand yards combined in offenses, we still had to drive the length of the field for Keith Byars to score the winning touchdown with just thirty-six seconds on the clock. People don't remember that Keith tied Pete Johnson's record of five touchdowns that day. People don't remember much of that at all. It was a game for the record book and they don't remember most of that.

You know what they do remember? They remember Keith Byars running sixty-seven yards down the east sideline, the last sixty of that without his shoe. As we traded leads with the Illini, Keith just ran right out of that big size fourteen shoe at the Illinois 40-yard line, and he didn't miss a beat to score

his fourth TD. He just kept going and took it to the house. Keith gave one of the greatest performances that day that I have ever seen by one player. I had seen Johnny Rodgers do some things, and I thought Keith Byars did a Heisman Trophy deal that day in Ohio Stadium. We won that game 45-38, and Keith carried us on his back. He had said in the first quarter when he fumbled that ball, "I'm gonna make up for it." He sure did.

To this day, I still think that Keith Byars would have won the Heisman that year, if Doug Flutie hadn't thrown that "Hail Mary" for Boston College. If Flutie hadn't thrown into the wind, if he hadn't thrown it from his own thirty-seven, if it hadn't been a 63-yard winning touchdown pass, well . . . I was in Denver recruiting when that happened, lying on the bed in my hotel room watching TV. When I saw Flutie throw that Hail Mary pass, and then when I saw that guy catch it to win the game, I shouted aloud, right there in the room, "Dang, Keith, there goes your Heisman." Sadly, I was right.

Earle's Coaches: Like Woody, Earle too had some great assistants who went on to become quite successful in other places. The list includes Dom Capers (currently defensive coordinator for the Green Bay Packers), Pete Carroll, Gary Blackney, Nick Saban, Bob Tucker, and Jim Tressel. Capers, Carroll, and Saban all became NFL head coaches.

Nick Saban was a fine defensive backfield coach during his time with the Buckeyes. When he came, right away I could tell Nick was a young man on the move, a coach that was going to do great things. He was very meticulous about things, a hard worker. Nick kept to himself, but he was always looking and listening for little slivers of truth about football that he could pick up from others. Nick had his own ideas about football. He had been around. Nick told me that he had played in college for Kent State with Jack Lambert, the rock of the Pittsburgh Steelers infamous "Steel Curtain" defense. Nick had a thorough knowledge of defense, and when he brought up a point, he could defend it very well. Sitting around the table, you knew he was going to be a guy who would become a head coach, because basically Saban was going to have the last say. He was so strong about his points. There were things he didn't bring up, but the things he felt strong about, he wasn't going to give up on. I don't care who the guy was, Nick could defend the things he wanted to do on defense and he would have the last word. He was a fine coach and a first-rate recruiter.

Nick Saban spent some time in the pros, but I think he recognized he's a college coach. He needs control, but when you are coaching in the pros, you have players making more money than you are making. It is a different ballgame. Nick deals better with young men. Nick had the knowledge to coach the pros, but by the time they get to that level, the players are pretty set in their ways. When an owner is paying a professional player a couple million a year, is that player going to let some NFL coach making three or four hundred thousand tell him what to do? If they get in an argument, the coach is the guy who's going. Nick realized this, and he is more of a teacher. He is a tremendous teacher on the field. And he's a control guy. You just don't have that in the pros. Every stop Nick has made in college football, he's won, because he is an excellent coach and a skilled teacher.

On January 18, 2001, Jim Tressel was announced as the next Ohio State football coach. The announcement was a surprise, and some Buckeye fans had truly never heard of him. In fact, it was a return trip to coach the Scarlett and Gray. Jim Tressel actually first came to Columbus in 1985, my last year on the Buckeyes' football coaching staff. Jim was young, ambitious, and inquisitive. Jim wanted to find out about all the positions, so he would volunteer for many different things when Coach Bruce would put opportunities out there. Although Jim had the quarterbacks, he also wanted the wide receivers. We had a grad assistant coaching those, but Jim wanted to coach them. Then there was a time that Jim wanted to coach the running backs and he did that. You knew that this was a young man on the way up. He was just absorbing it all.

Jim would ask questions about the line. And he would sometimes do things in the meetings that would cause me or the other coaches to want to do something to him! You might be watching film, and see a mistake that your guy made, but Earle wouldn't see it. You'd think you dodged a bullet and you could handle it later with the player privately and individually. And then Jim Tressel would blurt out, "Isn't that guy supposed to do this?" You wanted to just flat knock him out, because you would see things his guys didn't do and you didn't say anything. And there he was, pointing out your guy's mistake. But looking back I see now that even then, Jim was getting ready to be a head coach, and in fairness, that is what a head coach does. He sees the whole picture. That was what a young Jim Tressel was doing, looking at the whole picture and soaking it all in. Jim did a good job with our quarterbacks, he did a good job with our wide receivers, and he did a good job with the running backs when he had them. There was no doubt this was a young man on the way up. But more on that later.

Bob Tucker had a long relationship with Earle Bruce that started in Sandusky. He played center on Earle's Sandusky High team and was with Earle at Iowa State. Bob came with Earle to Ohio State. He knew Earle very well. Earle respected him and when Earle needed him to do something, Bob could get the job done. Bob was a real detail guy. After Denny Fryzel left, Bob became the defensive coordinator. The thing I remember most about Bob Tucker was not football. On 9/11, we were in the faculty club for an Athletic Department staff meeting when the twin towers were struck. Andy Geiger came to the podium, stopped the meeting, and told us what had happened. Bob had a son in one of the service academies, and I will never forget the look on his face as he was trying to reach his son to ask what his plans were. I will always remember that, remember Bob worrying about his son being deployed. Bob left Earle's staff the same year I did, and he went to Wooster College and became head coach. He later went to Youngstown State with Coach Tressel, at the time a move that I had no inkling would affect me. But it did, and you'll learn later how agonizing that was.

Old Nine & Three Earle: Earle Bruce worked hard at football. He knew his football, both offensively and defensively, and really worked hard at the game, but he had a predicament. Earle's dilemma was that he followed a legend, one of the all-time legends, and that was tough to do. Anyone in that seat would have had the same problem. Earle got labeled wrongly. "Old nine

and three Earle," they called him because he would win nine games. But his first year he went 11-0 and was within a whisker of a national championship. It is interesting to ponder how winning that first bowl game and a national championship might have changed Earle's tenure at Ohio State. What would two more points in that game have done to recruiting the next few years? What might have been for Earle Bruce? With a national championship, nine and three would have been easier to take for a few years! I suspect that is why Earle kept talking about the USC game.

But after that first season, it became "nine and three Earle." Now, 9-3 is not bad, unless you are at Ohio State, and unless you do that six straight years, like Earle did from '80-'85. Nine and three is not great either when, during your first year, you go undefeated clear up to the bowl game. Earle was at Ohio State nine years. Six of those nine years, he went 9-3, with a 10-3 and an 11-1 also thrown in there. His overall record in those nine years was 81-26-1. That is not bad, except when you went 11-1 in your first season. That is not bad, except when you are at Ohio State, except when you are following a legend, and when the 6-4-1 season is your ninth.

Our recruiting may have fallen off, and caused him to have that one bad year, when he was "only" 6-4-1. Some Big Ten schools would be mighty happy with 6-4-1. But in Columbus they didn't give Earle but one bad year. And when he went 6-4-1, he was out. Those that were after him had their leverage, and I think it had a lot more to do with things that didn't have anything to do with football. Woody was just a tough act to follow, no matter what Earle did. As I said earlier, they wanted to get rid of Tom Osborne because he couldn't beat Oklahoma at the beginning. But look at his record now. The Nebraska fans wanted to fire a guy that never won less than nine games a season.

There were also some changes that Earle had to deal with that Woody didn't have to in his career. Scholarship numbers were going down. When I was at Nebraska, we had ninety-five on scholarships, and then they started dropping them. These days it is down to seventy-five. When they dropped the numbers, it spread the players around. The bigger schools couldn't stockpile them as some had done. In addition, freshmen also became eligible in 1972 when they hadn't been before. All of that equalized college football. Archie started as a freshman, and they tell me that Tony Dorsett visited Ohio State that same year and really liked it. But why would Tony Dorsett want to come here when Archie Griffin was starting as a freshman? Of course, he wouldn't have known about Archie if freshmen hadn't been eligible Archie's first year. No one would have. Dorsett might have stayed if Archie hadn't been already playing. Can you imagine Tony Dorsett and Archie Griffin in the same backfield for Ohio State? Woody might have had that, had they not changed freshmen eligibility! Earle had to deal with many changes that Woody didn't have to earlier in his career.

I still say it to this day, though: Earle Bruce was a good coach. Earle Bruce knew football. And I owe Earle because he kept me when Woody was let go. It was real tough on me when Woody was fired, and then later it was just as tough on me when Earle was fired. I'll share that in a bit, but right now, I am getting ahead of myself in the story.

Chapter 21

YOU WIN WITH PEOPLE

By the end of 1984, I had spent six seasons on Earle's staff. Add the two seasons with Woody and the five under Tom and Bob, and I had seen many great athletes. Reflecting back, it is not the wins, losses, or records I carry with me. Instead, the memories I cherish are the people I met, coached, observed, or befriended. Those memories merit sharing, too. I told you about Ned Stevens bringing me Woody's book *You Win With People.* That title says it. As I look back on the coaching segment of my career, I realize my success was because I crossed paths with the kind of people Woody Hayes described.

You never get over coaching. It is the greatest thing a man can do. It is the greatest occupation a man can have, other than being a minister, a priest, or a rabbi. You see youngsters at their lowest and their highest. You see them when they win, and when they lose. You see them have success and cry with the joy of that success, and you see the pain they cry when they lose a tough one.

I said this in a speech at a football clinic one time, and the Rev. Jerry Falwell, Sr. was in the audience. He congratulated me afterwards, and we talked about it. The second day, though, he asked me, "You don't really believe that, do you? You can't say a priest or a rabbi. They're not going to heaven. You have to take that out of your speech." The next day he asked me again, "Do you really believe that?"

"Yeah," I answered. "I believe that ministers, priests, and rabbis do that, like coaches. They see people at all levels. I believe that other than those three, coaching is the highest calling a person can get."

"They're not going to heaven," he said.

"Really, Reverend," I told him, "I was just trying to cover all the bases." That was my experience with Jerry Falwell! He talked to me about that and later wrote me a letter, but I never did take it out of my speech. To this day, I believe what I said. I was trying to include Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. I was trying to include all the religions.

Nobody sees a person like a coach does, except these men of the cloth. No other person in our school had been in their houses. Not another teacher in Lincoln High School knew that one of my kids was sleeping under a porch. Of all the teachers at Ohio State, at Nebraska, Coach Hayes and I are the only ones that were in a kid's house that had no glass and only bed sheets over the windows in the wintertime. I was the one who was there and I saw that in that house. When Bill Thomas was a freshman, his roommate came to my room one night at fall camp. His roommate said, "You have to come see Bill. His mother just called and his father died." Bill's father had just died, and at

1 a.m., I had to go comfort him. Just last week, I had a former player call me. It had been maybe thirty years since I had coached the guy. He was down on his luck and having health problems. Some others and I got him up here and got him in the University Hospital. How many other teachers at this university get those calls? Coaches do all the time.

So good people develop because of good coaches. And the best coaches are visionary men and women, visionaries who build people and build programs. I have shared that Ohio State has had those people of vision who made Ohio State what it is. I look at the way things are built. I have discussed St. John, the visionary, who took a little 19,000-seat stadium where "the rock is" up on High Street, and built a more than 80,000-seat stadium. People thought he was crazy. Of course, now we have had to expand it, and it still isn't big enough. He also went to the outskirts of town and built not one but two golf courses, and championship courses at that. He hired coaches that won. John Wilce. Paul Brown. Wes Fesler. What if he hadn't been here? Then you take the guy at Michigan, Fielding Yost. Same thing, everywhere he went he was a winner. I mean, up there they aren't the leaders in victories in the country for nothing.

Those guys—St. John, Wilce, Brown, Yost—if they had been at Illinois, or Indiana, those schools would have become winners. Or the guys would have left! Those types are people who will go do things, and if you don't let them do it, they will go somewhere else. All those schools that have won over 600 games have had the people! You have to have those types to get it done, and those people are such powerful personalities and pushers that if you don't do it their way, they are going to go somewhere else. They are just winners.

The great programs, with great traditions, bring in those kinds of coaches. You can see it in Ohio State's pedigrees. John Wilce, the guy who coached Chic Harley, had to be a great coach. Then we got Francis Schmidt, who came from Texas and started the Gold Pants. He had to be a great coach. Next up was Paul Brown, who was so good in high school that all the high school coaches in Ohio got together. They wanted him gone and said, "Hey, you guys have to hire him down there at Ohio State, with our promise that we will send our best to you." That was how Paul Brown came to the Buckeyes. Then we got Woody Hayes, who was a winner everywhere he went in high school and at the two colleges where he coached before he came to Ohio State. You had the coaches from the Ohio high schools, who were trained by Paul Brown and Woody Hayes, sending their very best to play in that Horseshoe that St. John dreamed of. That was how Ohio State got it going. Those kinds of guys make a school.

Look at the University of Chicago, once a football powerhouse, a founding member of the Big Ten Conference, back when it was called the Western Athletic Conference. The first Heisman Trophy winner, Jay Berwanger, came from Chicago back in 1935. Chicago coach Amos Alonzo Stagg had been an All-American at Yale when Yale was *the power*. At Chicago, Stagg won two national championships, and from 1892 to 1932, seven Big Ten championships. Stagg was a great innovator of the game, introducing the man in motion and the lateral pass. Then, in 1932, at age seventy, after forty years and 224 wins, Chicago forced him to retire. "Adios, Amos," they said. Except

when Amos left, they didn't have a strong guy take over. You know what? Seven years later, in 1939, the University of Chicago dropped football. It would be thirty years before that once powerful program would play another football game, and then as a Division III program. Tell me a great coach doesn't make a difference in a university.

Of course, Notre Dame wouldn't be Notre Dame without Knute Rockne or Frank Leahy or Ara Parseghian.

The great coaches are all aggressive people. Paul Brown was one of the most aggressive. Woody Hayes was very aggressive. All the guys that I coached for were very aggressive people. Bob Devaney. Tom Osborne. You can be fooled by how soft Tom Osborne talks, but I tell you, those athletes on that team back then were afraid of him—rather, not afraid of him but respectful. Here was a guy who didn't holler, didn't cuss, but if he said Judas Priest in front of them, they shook. Earle Bruce too forced his will on teams. These guys were all aggressive. If you notice, the guys whose teams win, well, their players talk like them. You listen to our football players who played for Jim Tressel. They sounded just like him. You listen to the guys that played with Woody and Earle. They sound just like Woody and Earle. I mean, they are so ingrained that they believe it. They believe the coach, believe his philosophy, and believe what it stands for. It is a winning attitude that permeates all good programs.

All these great coaches are a different breed; all those guys are doing something while the rest of us are asleep. These guys have a plan, and they are working that plan. Look at Jim Tressel. He knew he wanted to be a head coach. He was taking things from different people: what to do, how to do it. His dad was a great coach. Jim was ready and figured he would go to Youngstown State, and he could get it done. He formulated a plan, and he had that Winners Manual that he put out to his players to read. You don't develop a plan like the one Jim had after you get to Ohio State. You read his books; he had all these things going on at Youngstown and he brought them here. He was working his way into it, taking a little bit from this guy, taking a little bit from that guy. That is the way they are.

Winners go places. I look back at my own career, how I was willing to leave Lincoln High School and go to Southeast. As I told my friend Buford, "We're just playing football because it is in season at Lincoln. They play to win at Southeast." I had the guys winning at Lincoln, but I was willing to leave my comfort zone to go there. Look where it took me!

Because of that journey, I came to know the most remarkable people. Allow me to pause in my story, and share some insight on the people I met at the places I have been. There are so many that once again the story will play out in four acts. *On the Road* is the first one, and it is all about recruiting, the starting point and lifeblood of any program.

YOU WIN WITH PEOPLE

Act I—On the Road

It all starts with recruiting. To *Win With People,* you first have to get good people! I first became a college recruiter at Nebraska, but I actually learned the ropes as a high school coach. I was always studying the coaches who were recruiting my guys. One coach might be in my office talking to a kid, and I would think, "This guy's good." With the next coach, though, it might be, "What's going on with this guy? He doesn't know what kids are like; he has no way of getting to what turns this kid on. He's not reaching this kid." I was always studying the college recruiters, and it helped me when I became one myself

The average fan has no idea of the time college coaches spend on the road recruiting. There are only so many athletes out there, and every coach is after them. It was even worse when I was coaching. We didn't have cell phones or summer camps. There were not as many restrictions on how often you could see a kid, so I spent many a long, lonely night on the road. Ohio State was better than Nebraska, because at Nebraska I was always recruiting Ohio or another state.

Those long drives and late nights wore on a guy during recruiting season. When you were driving Coach Hayes, he would go to sleep, so he wouldn't be keeping you company. It might be 11:30 or 12:00 at night. We had been in this house until ten or eleven, and then we had two hours of driving ahead of us. I drove home, tired and sleepy. It would be wintertime, and Woody had the heater on, so I would roll down the window and let that air hit my face. I would turn the heater down, and soon Woody would reach over because he was cold. Well no wonder—he didn't have a coat of course—and he would reach over and crank that thing back up. There I was trying to stay awake, and Woody was turning up the heat. I was sticking my head out the window. I would take my shoe off, so I could put a bare foot to the gas pedal. I was trying everything to stay awake. I would hum, because I for sure didn't want to wake him up by singing! I had to hum! I would just do everything to stay awake, and there was Woody next to me—sawing logs.

In my case, there were some other personal sacrifices. My son Billy followed in my footsteps and became a football player. He played tight end at Thomas Worthington High School, his senior season coming in the fall of 1981, my third year with Earle. Because I was a Division I college coach, there were quite a few times I couldn't watch my own son play. NCAA rules mandated colleges could only see a player play so many times. For most of Billy's high school seasons, Thomas Worthington had a player the Division I schools were recruiting. And of course, with a school of that caliber in football, oftentimes the opponent would have a player. It didn't matter to the NCAA that I would just be there to see my son, or that Ohio State wasn't recruiting a

certain kid. If anyone was recruiting either team, I couldn't go. Then, too, for half of Billy's games, Ohio State was on the road, out of town. So there I was, a lifelong football coach, with a son following in my shoes, playing a position I coached. It was every father's dream, yet I couldn't see him play. That was hard.

It carried on beyond high school. Earle told me that he would give Billy a scholarship. But had he come to Ohio State, since he was a tight end, I would have coached him. It is hard for a young man to play on a team where his father is a coach. Had he come he might have gotten shortchanged. If Billy had played ahead of some other guys, the accusation would be it was because I was his coach. Yet I probably would have been harder on him, made his bar higher to get to play than others, because I wanted to make sure I didn't show any favoritism. So we said no. That was difficult, but it worked out best for him. He went away to school and made it on his own, starting three years as a tight end for the University of Dayton on some of the very good football teams they had in that era.

What Do You Wanna Be? "What do you want to be?" was the first question I asked every young man I recruited. My first priority was to find out what the athlete was interested in becoming. Starting in high school, I asked every kid that I met what he wanted to be, and I put it on a 3x5 card. I continued that in college. When they told me what they wanted to be, that was the way I went. If a kid didn't want to be anything, I really wasn't interested in him. One time a guy I was recruiting said to me, "I don't know." I told him that I really wasn't interested in recruiting him. See, when I asked a kid what he wanted to be, he told me a lot about himself. I think you ought to want to be something every day. It might change, but *every single day you should want to be something.*

When I asked Jim Lachey, "What do you want to be?" he wanted to be an anesthesiologist. When Jim came to campus, I had the top people from the anesthesiology department lined up to visit with him. Another time a kid from Cincinnati, Joe Smith, wanted to be in veterinary medicine, so I studied veterinary medicine. I told him, "We are the top vet school in the country for large animals." When he came for his visit, I had worked out with the vet people for him to watch them operate on a horse. It came down to us and Auburn and I told him Auburn was good in small animals—they were good in dogs and cats—but Ohio State was good in large animals. I always gave them everybody's strength, but I never knocked the other school. I just said, "Hey, Joe, come here and this and this will happen." Joe came. He left a veterinarian, and two of his sons later played on the Buckeyes' 2010 football team.

The next question I would ask them was, "What have you done to work toward that goal? What did you do yesterday? What have you done today? I gave them examples. One guy that lived in Detroit told me he wanted to be a pro basketball player. I asked him, "When was the last time you played basketball?"

"Last Saturday," he answered.

"You don't want to be one," I told him. "You know Jo Jo White?"

The young man said, "Yeah."

Jo Jo White grew up in St. Louis, played at Kansas, and then with the Celtics during the 1970s. He won two NBA championships and became one of pro basketball's first "iron men" by playing in all eighty-two games for five straight seasons. I told that kid that Jo Jo practiced every day for seven years, not missing a day, until one Christmas Day in St. Louis. The Y was closed and he couldn't get the snow off the outdoor court. That's 2,556 straight days that Jo Jo practiced. It took a deep snow on Christmas Day to stop him. I went on to tell the kid how Bill Russell went thirteen years without missing a day of playing basketball. I told him those were the people that wanted to do something; those were the people who really wanted to play pro basketball.

The good ones all want to be something. We lost a big tackle to Michigan, because Woody wanted to make him a doctor. He was a smart kid. I asked him what he wanted to be, and when he told me a dentist, I asked him my second question. That was always, "Why do you want to be a dentist?"

He said, "Dentists work five days a week, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Doctors work 24-7."

Woody told the kid, "Doctors make more money than those guys. Doctors do this, and doctors do that." There wasn't anything Woody liked more than a football player who became a doctor. One of his favorites was his quarterback Don Unverferth, who graduated as Ohio State's all-time leading passer at that time. Don went on to graduate number one in his class from Ohio State Medical School and became a world-renowned cardiologist. Like Jim Parker, Don Unverferth was one of Woody's guys. So Woody kept trying to make this recruit a doctor. But this guy was smart. This guy didn't want to work on Saturdays and Sundays. He only wanted to work eight hours a day. He was a good tackle and so he went up to Michigan instead.

I found out later that that was why we lost him—because Woody tried to make him a doctor. I told Woody, "You gotta listen to these guys."

"Well, Bill, you've taught me something," Woody admitted.

I Need Cheeseburgers! When I recruited for Nebraska, I had Ohio. That's eight hundred high schools that play football. I would fly into Cincinnati and hit all the Cincinnati schools. Then I would go over to Middletown, drive to Dayton, and then on to Columbus to hit the Columbus schools. After that, I would head to Massillon, Canton, and Youngstown. From there I would head back across the state and hit Sandusky, Elyria, Toledo, all those places. I was doing this every week. It was a full time job just hitting all those schools.

It was different then. Everything was face to face, or on a landline. We had no cell phones. We had to work to find players. We had to beat the bushes. You had less information but were allowed much more contact. We could buy them meals, and take them to off campus restaurants. That was the big deal then. It was nothing at Nebraska for me to drop several hundred dollars in a night on a meal. Of course, it would start out with the recruit and his parents. The next dinner it would be, "Can my girlfriend come? Can my brother come?" By the time you hooked the kid, at that last meal you were feeding Grandma and Grandpa, his little league coach, and his kindergarten teacher. It had grown to pretty much anyone the kid could think of! And we were not going to cheap places, either!

One time I had Eddie Beamon in the Legionnaire Club in Lincoln. Nebraska was after him. You know the setting. Fancy place. White tablecloths. Expensive menu. I told Eddie, "Order anything you want."

"I want two cheeseburgers, Coach," Eddie told me.

There was one problem. The waiter told me they didn't have any cheeseburgers. Well, now, that just wasn't going to work. I whispered to the maître d' my dilemma. We had a prized recruit in town who wanted cheeseburgers and I needed cheeseburgers. Soon, one of the cooks back in their kitchen was grinding hamburger from the finest porterhouse steaks in all of Nebraska. You do whatever it takes. In this case, it didn't work, though. Woody got Eddie.

Today you have camps where kids go to be seen. Kids come to you now. Video is sophisticated. Information is more widely available. If you found a guy back then, you had an edge. Now, everyone knows about everyone, and it's "Can you get them to come?" Back then, it was threefold. First, could you find them? Then, would they come? And last, could you keep it a secret so no one else found them?

Connecting: Even if you find the kid, you still have to connect. Luther Henson was a defensive tackle from Sandusky. In addition to being a good football player, Luther was undefeated in wrestling until the heavyweight finals at the state tournament. It wasn't my territory, but Michigan was after Luther; everybody was after Luther. Consequently, Woody wanted me to go with him to Luther's house one night and help recruit him. Woody visited with him that evening, and then I asked Coach to let me talk to him alone. Luther and I went out back where we could get away from everybody.

I said to him, "Hey, Luther, you haven't said a word tonight. What do you want to do? Do you want to go to school? Do you want to play football?" Woody and his parents had been talking, but Luther had just been sitting there and I could tell he wasn't paying one bit of attention.

"Coach," Luther told me, "I never thought about it. I have four sisters, and I'm the only boy. I never thought about college. I just went out on Friday night and had a little fun throwing people around. Now all these coaches are coming in here asking me to go to their schools. All I did was have a little fun. I never thought about college."

We talked, and I convinced Luther of all the good things that could happen if he would come to Ohio State. Finally, Luther said he was coming. He came to Ohio State and started for four years. He played two years on defense for Coach Hayes, and his third year on defense for Coach Bruce. During his senior year, though, for some reason the defensive coaches said they didn't want him. "I'll take him," I said, "Give him to me." I think they thought he was loafing, but he was really playing hurt. I put him at tackle, and we moved Joe Lukens to guard. Luther went on to play three years in the NFL for the New England Patriots. Can you imagine a kid today with that much pro potential not even thinking about going to college? Until I went up and talked to Luther, he hadn't even thought about it. Times were different.

One advantage I had as a black recruiter was connecting with the black athletes. Every town that I would go into, if I heard the name Attucks, Lincoln, Booker T. Washington, Wendell Phillips, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, or

George Washington Carver, I already knew it was a black school. If we would get a tip that said Indianapolis Crispus Attucks is strong this year, I would say to the staff, "That's a black school. I'll take it."

"How do you know that?" people would ask me. Well, most large cities have those schools and every time you see them, they are black schools. Think about when those schools were being built. How many black national heroes were there to name a school after? That is why they were all the same. I always joked with my white friends, "You name schools after directions. North, South, East, and West. We name them after great men."

It is a great trivia question. Why does Crispus Attucks have all these schools named after him? He was the first person to die in the the 1770 Boston Massacre, a major event that led to the American Revolution (1775–1783). Now, he didn't do anything else, but he died, he was the first one to give his life for our country, and he was black. So everywhere I went, there was a school building in the black community named after him. That was one little advantage I had.

Recognizing Talent: Football is two simple things: Recognizing talent, and then developing it. Some coaches can do one. Some the other. The best ones can do both. Recruiting is all about recognizing talent when you see it.

I told you about the year I coached first and second round draft choices—Bill Roberts our tackle and John Frank our tight end. I came into the coaches' meeting the next week after that draft and casually said, "I've got a one and a two. *Anyone else in here got a one?*" Of course, I already knew none of the other coaches had a first-round draft pick in their stable, let alone a first and second. It was fun pulling their chain, because I had a reason to rib them! "I know a certain coach," I told them, "a coach who they used to get on in practice, a coach they used to complain to about a guy he was coaching, a guy they said was not doing anything, not carrying his load. Well, apparently the pros think that this same guy is pretty good! The pros think that guy is a first round pick."

I learned that from Woody, when I would tell him my advice wasn't being taken by the other coaches. "Oh well, I guess they don't think you can coach, Bill," he would chuckle to me.

My coaching philosophy was positive; I would always tell you the two positive things before I would tell you the negative. But some of the coaches had a different approach. They were always looking at what a guy couldn't do. I know this because I tested them once, to prove a point to them. I had a high school film of a guy whom I had recruited from Detroit. I asked some of the other Buckeye coaches to look at the tape and see if we should take this guy. One of them looked at the tape and said, "He's a little ways away. Maybe we should put him on hold. He's a second or third guy. If we can't get some of these other guys, we'll come back and get him. We don't need him."

I asked that coach, "Do you know who this is?"

"No," he said, "you just told me to look at the tape. You didn't tell me who it was."

"This guy is Jerome Foster," I said, naming one of our current players. "The guy on that tape just finished starting for you for four years. *You're telling me he's not a taker, and he just finished starting at Ohio State for four years?*"

"Tell me what you saw on that film?" the coach asked.

"I saw him stand up this guy and then go over and make the tackle. I saw him run over here and make a tackle. I saw him all over the field, making tackles."

"Yeah," the other coach said, "but didn't you see him just stand there one time and just look around? Didn't you see him just stand there, just loaf on that one play?"

"Coach, I saw that he could run. I saw that he could tackle. I saw that he could block. That was what I saw. I have this saying, one that I got from Eddie Robinson of Grambling. *If he could do, on every play, all the things that you are talking about, then he wouldn't need to come to Ohio State. He could just go play on Sunday.*"

That coach said to me, "That's amazing. One of the best guys I ever coached and I wouldn't even have recruited him."

The guy on that tape was Jerome Foster who left Ohio State as a four-year letterman. I recruited Jerome. Jerome showed me he could run. He showed me he could tackle. He showed me he could knock another player off, and still make the tackle. It was like Eddie Robinson talking about "What can the guy do?" It was like when the coach told Eddie, "Buck Buchannan can't do anything but tackle." *Can't do anything but tackle. Now what do we want a defensive guy to do?* Jerome Foster could tackle!

Now admittedly, Jerome also showed me he could just stand and look. I mean, everyone else was running, but he was just standing there. They were all the way over there on the sideline, and he sure as heck wasn't running that far. And he was a player that didn't like to practice hard. But Jerome was a kid who was so good in high school—they had about a hundred kids out for football at his school and only two coaches—that when he could do all the things he could do, they were not about to take him off the field. So I knew that he didn't really need to practice in high school. I knew he didn't have to work. But he had all the tools, and Eddie had taught me that *it's up to the coach to get the guy to play.* So I took a chance on Jerome Foster. And I got him the old-fashioned way. I earned it.

Michigan wanted Jerome. He was the number two recruit in the whole state of Michigan. Everybody wanted him. I didn't sign him until about two-and-a-half-weeks after recruiting was over. I would go up there every day. Jerome would come down from his classes and say to me, "You here again?"

"I'm here," I would say.

All of the Michigan coaches would be there too, including Bo. Michigan was switching coaches off on me to boot. Being close, they could do that. Bo would be there. Then the guy who recruited the inner city of Detroit would be there. Then another guy would come. But I was there in his school every day. I would stay until school was out. Every day I would be there. Every time he came down to see his high school coach, I was there. When he came down for gym class, I was there. When they had their offseason workout, at 7 a.m. in the morning, I was there. When he went home, I was there. On Friday, when I would leave, I would say to Jerome, "Well, I'll see you next Monday."

On Monday, he'd say, "You here again?"

"I'm here, baby," I would say.

That was how I finally got Jerome Foster to be an Ohio State Buckeye. It paid off. Jerome Foster, the four-year letterman, is on one of the Ohio State All-Time teams, was a fifth-round draft choice, and played five seasons in the NFL

I also saw coaches get down on a recruit. The more you see a guy, the less you become impressed with him. When I was at Nebraska, we had a recruit named Mike Fultz. He lived right in Lincoln, and he was maybe six-foot-five and 275 pounds. Mike could run, could do everything. We thought this guy was the world. Everyone was going to see him on Friday night since he was close. When we were in town, most of our coaches would go see him. As the season went along, though, people started to say, "I'm not so sure." He had become familiar. We were looking for stuff he couldn't do, not at what he could do. Thank goodness Mike did go ahead and come to our place. He started three years for Nebraska, and went on and played in the pros. Eddie Robinson was right: You should always ask, what *can* they do?

The Legend of Johnny Roland: I have explained how recruiting was different in my day. Of course, it was also different in the times before me, as compared to my days. Johnny Roland, the great halfback and All-American at Missouri, illustrates that. In 1965, Johnny led Mizzou to an 8-2-1 record and a victory over Florida in the Sugar Bowl. Johnny was the first black to serve as the captain of any University of Missouri athletic team. His jersey was retired, and later he was inducted to the College Football Hall of Fame.

I was coaching at Lincoln High when Johnny played for Missouri, and at that same time, Gale Sayers was playing for Kansas. That gave me a reason to go see the great Gale Sayers. Johnny Roland was my guy, since I was from Missouri, and I wanted him to be better than Gale Sayers. One day, I went over to Kansas to see Sayers play and to compare the two. That day, I saw Gale Sayers do something I couldn't believe. I said to myself, "No way will Johnny Roland ever be better than Gale Sayers. He can't be. I just saw Sayers turn a corner, and he put his elbow on the ground; when he turned the corner, he was that low, but he continued to run. Your knees just aren't made to take what Gale Sayers just did."

It turns out I was right on both counts. Gale Sayers of course went on to be a five-time Pro Bowler for the Chicago Bears. He still holds the NFL record for touchdowns per kickoff returns, and is considered by some to be the greatest open field runner in college football history. Gale Sayers was the youngest player ever inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Ironically, he was inducted July 30, 1977, the same day my friend and fellow Buckeye, Bill Willis, was inducted. At Sayers' induction, Bears coach George Halas said, "If you wish to see perfection as a running back, you had best get a hold of a film of Gale Sayers. He was poetry in motion. His like will never be seen again." Unfortunately, I was also right about the knees. Gale Sayers' career was cut short by first one and then a second knee injury. But for Johnny Roland, I might never have seen the great Gale Sayers play.

When I arrived at Nebraska, some of the coaches told me how ten years before, Missouri had beaten Nebraska to get Johnny Roland. They said Missouri kept him away from Nebraska the night before signing day, so Nebraska

couldn't get him to sign. At least that was their version. That always stuck with me, and it gave me some ideas about how this recruiting goes. This stuff was rough in the early days. You had to get in there and really mix it up to beat people out.

One time later on, I was recruiting a guy that everyone was after, and that story came back to me. We were at this kid's basketball game and several schools were there chasing him. After the game, all the recruiters lined up outside of the dressing room. They were going to let us go in only one at a time to talk with him, and only give each school five minutes of time. We agreed to pull straws to see what order we went in. It was the day before signing, and I wanted to be the last one in that room, the last person that kid talked to. Now I told them, loud enough for all to hear, "I don't want to be last!" But all the while I was thinking to myself, *I'm going to do something to my straw to make myself last.* So we drew straws, and when they were not looking, I broke a piece of mine off. Sure enough, I was last.

The rest of them went in, one at a time, and then they would come out after their five minutes. Of course, after they came out, they waited around to see what the kid decided. When my turn came, I went in, and all the rest of them were still out there waiting for me, waiting to see what he told me, because he hadn't committed to anyone else.

All those coaches were out there waiting for me and the recruit to come out of that locker room past them. Even after the kid told me he was coming, I knew that he would have to walk past all those waiting coaches. Even after he made his decision, I knew they could still plant doubt, still maybe get him to reconsider. When I got in there, I saw this window in the back of the locker room. As I thought about those waiting coaches, I thought back to what Nebraska had told me about how Missouri had kept Johnny Roland away from them. I talked to the recruit, and when he finished with his shower, I suddenly just said to him, "Let's go out here." We climbed out the back window. It was just an impulse. Now all this time, these other guys were still out front, waiting for me to come out of the locker room. Well, we never came out, and I wish to this day that I could have seen their faces when they realized we were not going to. Of course, we never did because we both were long gone.

We slipped around to the parking lot, and I just got in my car and drove off. The next morning I went over to the kid's house, and he and his parents signed the letter of intent. That was how I signed that youngster. I just ushered him out the back so those other coaches didn't get another shot at him. I wonder how long those other coaches stood there, waiting for me or the kid to come out? I sure wish I could have seen their faces.

I must tell you, though: there is one thing wrong with this story. Forty years later, I found out that the story some Nebraska coaches told me never actually happened. Recently, I called Johnny Roland personally and asked him, and he told me Nebraska's version of the story wasn't true. Johnny said that he was planning to go to Missouri all along and that Nebraska was never in the hunt! For forty years, I thought Missouri had pulled one! Still, it makes for a good story, and it did help me land the kid I told you about.

Of course, they have all the rules today that make it different from back

then—rules that you have to send the letters of intent through the mail, or fax them, rules that you can't see them the last few days before signing day, lots of rules like that now. So today, there wouldn't even be a posse of coaches after a kid the night before signing, like there was that evening in the high school locker room. Those rules are good rules now, and there are good reasons for them. But back in my early days, recruiting was a lot different, and I owe one success to the urban legend of Missouri and Johnny Roland!

Everybody's in St. Henry: I recruited many players everyone was after. Jim Lachey was one. I first saw Jim at a track meet in St. Henry. St. Henry had won the state championship in basketball the year before, and Jim had started on that team as a freshman. When I got to that track meet, there was this great big guy backing into the starting blocks for the 100-yard dash. I was standing there wondering what was going on. What was this big guy doing running the 100? Now, this was a conference meet; it wasn't just a dual meet, yet this guy proceeded to get second. This great big guy smoked them in the 100. Of course, that great big guy running the 100 was Jim Lachey. And he was only a sophomore.

I had seen enough. I came back and told Woody about Jim. Then when Earle came, I told Earle about him, too. Earle asked, "How good is this guy?"

I said, "Everybody's out there."

"Everybody's out there?" Earle asked. "Everybody? Everybody's out there in little St. Henry, Ohio?"

"Everybody's out there," I said. "That's what makes him good. Everybody's out there. Tennessee's there. Johnny Majors is there. Lou Holtz of Arkansas is there. UCLA's there. Bear Bryant's there. All those guys are there! They're coming from across the country to little St. Henry, Ohio."

Earle said, "You know that's off the beaten path, don't you?"

"That's what makes him great," I told Earle. I could understand them going to see him if he lived in Columbus, Cleveland, or Cincinnati. Someone could say they've got a big kid over there at such and such school, and they could make a quick stop. But you have to drive a while to get to St. Henry. There are no airplanes going in there.

You have to remember the times. It was before the Internet, before cell phones, before fax machines. Before highlight tapes. Before recruiting services. Before ESPN talking heads. You had to work to find these kids then. You first had to find them, and then you had to go see them play, go see if they were any good. All you had otherwise was the coach's word and those old projector game films they would ship you. So to have all those guys coming to rural St. Henry was just remarkable. Woody helped us recruit Jim. Even though it was after he had been fired, and after Earle came in, Woody still helped us with Jim Lachey. It said a lot about Coach Hayes that he would still do that.

I had an advantage over the other guys. It was one of the times in my life that it paid to be black. When I would show up at St. Henry, they knew for sure Ohio State was there. All the rest of the coaches recruiting him were white, but when I showed up, word would go up and down the halls. "Ohio State is here," they whispered. I would be at a basketball game, and the

Michigan coach would be sitting just down the way from me, but everyone would murmur, "*Ohio State's here.*" It wasn't hard to be noticed. Some nights I might have been the only black in the whole field house at St. Henry.

I would go to Jim's games and sit where he could see me. I knew his class schedule. I would get to the school, and there I would be, at the end of the hall he was coming down. I knew when he went to English, when he went to geometry. "I know where you're going," I would tell him. "I've got your schedule right here. We're going to room 101!" Then I would walk with him to class and talk about Ohio State. I did that all day long. Remember, back then we could have a lot more contact.

Every week I would ask him, "You're 80 percent sure you're coming?"

Jim would say, "Yeah, I'm 85 percent sure."

One week, I jumped it up to 95 percent on him. I was working him.

He caught it. "I'm not quite 95 percent, Coach," he came right back.

The next week I saw him, I bumped it up to 98 percent. "You about 98 percent sure?" I asked.

Jim finally decided he was going to come to Ohio State, but not without holding back that he might want to visit UCLA. Jim told me that he was almost sure he wanted to come to Ohio State, but then Terry Donahue of UCLA pushed him hard. Jim started talking about going out there just to see the mountains. I told him, "Hey, you stay here. We'll show you the mountains. We're going to the Rose Bowl. We'll go out there."

Jim said no, that he wanted to go see the mountains. He had never been out there, and he wanted to go see the mountains. "We'll take care of you," I told him, "we'll take you out there." I tried to keep him from going but the pull was too great.

"No, Coach, I want to go see that place."

I Wanna See the Beverly Hillbillies: Finally, Jim went out to UCLA. They told him when he got off the plane, "You wanna go swimming, there's the ocean. You wanna go skiing, there are the mountains. We have jobs for you." They were throwing all these girls at him, and they had all these movie stars recruiting him. He had dinner with them. Imagine the impression this made on a kid from St. Henry, Ohio. Here are Jim's own words describing that:

> In the spring of my sophomore year, Ohio State had sent a coach out, Steve Devine, who was a graduate assistant at the time. He came and talked to me about Bill Myles and the opportunity to play for one of the great line coaches who had been first at Nebraska and then Ohio State. Number one, I was excited just to have Ohio State's business card in my pocket. And then to hear about Coach Myles. I learned a little bit more about him. Of course, the Internet wasn't there, so I went to the old media guides in the library and studied them. He seemed like a good guy, and I talked to different people and heard good things.
>
> I was fortunate. Tennessee and Johnny Majors came to see me. Lou Holtz was at Arkansas and he came. I tried to pick one school in each conference. Of course, the Big Ten was Ohio State. Independent was

Notre Dame. Southwest was Arkansas, which was having some success then. I went to North Carolina and Tennessee in the SEC. That was a great opportunity. It's one thing when Ohio State says they want you, but then suddenly you hear it again from another guy, and then another. Suddenly you think, "Maybe this is going to work out!"

In all honesty, my mind was made up. I remember going up to Ann Arbor, just for a regular game. I was watching the game, and they were playing South Carolina with George Rodgers who won the Heisman that year, so it was fun. But I remember when the Ohio State score was posted, I was like "Yeah." That's when I knew. That's the score I wanted to hear. I wanted to know how Ohio State was doing, because that was my team!

Except then I got an opportunity to go out to UCLA. Terry Donahue was recruiting me. They picked me up at the airport, and I think I slept two hours the whole forty-eight hours I was there in Westwood. "What do you want to do?" they asked. "Do you want to go to Hollywood? Where do you want to go?"

Now—remember this was 1981—I told them, *"I wanna go see the Beverly Hillbillies mansion!"* Then next thing I know, I'm standing right in front of it, taking pictures! I'm sure the coaches at that point were wondering about this kid from the Midwest who wanted to see the Beverly Hillbillies mansion! The rules were a lot different then, and we had a lot of fun. I got on the plane coming home and thought, "Man, I had a blast. I could see playing with these guys." At Ohio State, they put you in dorms, with a bathroom way at the end of the hall. Out in Westwood, they were in condos! It was nice!

Jim left Ohio 95 percent sure he was a Buckeye. It was a new ballgame when he returned. On the way back, during his layover in Chicago, Jim called his sister and asked, "What would Mom and Dad think if I wanted to go to UCLA?"

"They wouldn't like that, Jim. They want to see you play," his sister answered.

Thus, I had to go out there and recruit this guy again, go up to St. Henry to bring him back into the fold. I was re-recruiting Jim, and his little brother Ronnie helped me. When Jim told his family that he really liked UCLA, his younger bother Ronnie—who was ten at the time—came storming in. He looked up at Jim with a sad face and said, "I can't believe it, Jimmy, I'll never get to see you play. UCLA, boo, boo, boo, Ohio State, rah, rah, rah." Then he started crying.

What else was Jim going to do? I had all of them working on him, and tears rolling down his little brother's cheeks. Jim Lachey decided he was going to stay in Ohio. I had him. He was a Buckeye.

Bases Loaded, Bottom of the Ninth, Strikeout! There were times too, that in spite of what you did, things just didn't work. In 1972, I was having a great year at Nebraska. I was recruiting Ross Browner from Warren Western Reserve, Gary Jeter from Cathedral Latin in Cleveland, Marvin Powell from Atlanta,

and Steve Anderson from Toledo Scott. There was also our current OSU AD, Gene Smith, who back then was graduating from Saint Peter Chanel High School in Cleveland. They were all the bluest of the blue chippers. Everybody wanted them, and there was a time going into the home stretch when I had them all. Imagine what Woody was thinking, since they were mostly Ohio guys, and I was going to get them all for Nebraska. It is quite a story.

Gene Smith was the first one that escaped me. He attended Saint Peter Chanel, a parochial school. I don't know if Gene was Catholic, but when Notre Dame offered, Gene accepted. Gene was the most cerebral of the four guys I was after. He was very bright. Gene was a good player or I wouldn't have been recruiting him for Nebraska, nor would Notre Dame have been recruiting him, nor would Ohio State have been after him. But they all were, until Gene picked Notre Dame.

Even though I lost Gene, Ross Browner was going to Nebraska. I had Ross. One of the Ohio State coaches had messed up with him, and Ross had signed the Big Eight letter of intent. Gary Jeter also signed the Big Eight letter, as did Steve Anderson. The Big Eight letter, at the time, said you couldn't go to any school in the Big Eight unless it was Nebraska. So I had these three and it was a real coup. Of course, that letter was only good if they stayed in the Big Eight.

The week before signing date, I was chatting with Ross Browner, and he started talking about Notre Dame, which hadn't been in the picture. I had been selling Ross how much Nebraska was on television because back then, of course, TV wasn't as widespread as today. Then Ara Parseghian told him, "Notre Dame's on every Sunday morning, plus it's close enough for your dad to get over there." Ross was coming. I had him, until that Thursday of the last week before the signing date, when he called and told me he was going to Notre Dame. I lost my second. All Browner did at Notre Dame was become a four-year starter, a two-time All-American, and one of the most decorated defensive players in Fighting Irish history.

I had lost Gene, lost Browner, but Gary Jeter was still coming. Gary was going to Southern Cal for this all-star weekend, but I figured I had an in on him. Gary and Ross had both been down to Ohio State, but they had decided they were not going to Ohio State. Gary was coming to Lincoln because his Uncle Tony had been an All-American tight end at Nebraska. Gary's mother was Tony's sister, and because of that, he was coming. The week before the signing day, I took Coach Osborne to Gary's house. He wasn't home and we couldn't find him. We were sitting in the living room with Gary's mother, and every once in a while the phone would ring. I didn't know at the time, but Gary was calling to see if we were still there. He wasn't coming home as long as we were there. Tom soon figured that out, and he said, "Well, he's not coming home." So we left.

Two days later, Gary Jeter called me at home. It went something like this:

"Coach," he said to me, "I *like* Nebraska. Coach, I *like* you better than I like all the other guys who recruited me. I could probably *be* a better football player at Nebraska. But, I'm just a little Catholic boy. I went to Cathedral Latin, an all-boys Catholic school in Cleveland. I got out there to USC and Jane Fonda met me at the airport. Coach, we stood there, and the guy asked, 'You wanna go skiing?' He just pointed to the mountains. 'You wanna go

boating?' He just pointed to the ocean. Coach, they had O. J. Simpson there, they had Mike Garrett there. There were all these pretty girls on the beach. They told me I could be in the movies, be in summer stock. They told me I was going to get to work for MGM. Coach, I'm sorry. I couldn't take it. I just had to go. Coach, I'm going to Southern Cal!"

There went Jeter. Of course, all Gary Jeter did at USC was earn All-American, get drafted in the first round, and then play twelve years in the NFL.

I was now down three. But I still had Steve Anderson and Marvin Powell in the fold, two more blue chippers. Steve Anderson was from Toledo Scott, and I was supposed to sign him in Toledo, and then I was going someplace else to see about another guy. At the same time that I had Steve Anderson, I also had Marvin Powell from Atlanta. The day before signing, I had them both. Now remember, this was long before they could just sign a letter and fax it in.

Steve Anderson was going to sign in Toledo the morning of signing day; the day before, I was in Toledo waiting to do that when I got a call from Atlanta that Marvin Powell was ready to sign down there. Marvin wanted me down in Atlanta for his signing. So I called Mike Corgan, our Nebraska backfield coach who was recruiting in the state of Michigan. "Mike," I asked, "could you go sign Steve Anderson for me at Toledo Scott, while I go to Atlanta to sign Marvin?" Mike said he would. I called and I asked Steve if this would be all right, and he said sure. So I had it all arranged.

I got on the plane that next morning and I flew from Toledo to Atlanta. When I got there, Marvin Powell had changed his mind. He wasn't going to Nebraska after all. I mean, I had already checked into a hotel in Atlanta, and suddenly Marvin wasn't coming. So I checked out of the hotel and flew back to Toledo from Atlanta. I had no more than landed in Toledo, when the son-of-a-gun called me, and Marvin was now going to Nebraska again. Marvin Powell was back in play. I had to get back down there, because he was ready to sign with Nebraska.

Well, I got right back on that plane in Toledo and flew back to Atlanta. When I checked into the same hotel, the desk clerk gave me this funny look and said, "You already checked in this morning."

"Yes," I said, "but I checked out and now I'm checking back in." I had flown from Toledo to Atlanta, back to Toledo, and then again to Atlanta!

I went right over to Marvin's house, and one of the assistant coaches from Alabama was already there. We both were sitting there talking, waiting for Marvin to commit, and someone said something about Gayle Sayers. Gayle appeared on TV and Marvin didn't even know who Gayle Sayers was. I asked myself, what kind of kid is this? He wants to play college football, but he doesn't even know who Gayle Sayers is? We sat there a long time and nothing happened. The Alabama assistant finally said, "Bill, I'm going to leave. I'm going, no need for us to hang around." I told him goodbye, but that I was hanging there for a while. He left, and that just left Marvin's parents and me in the living room with Marvin. I thought I had them right where I wanted them. Fat chance. Little did I know.

About this time, this coach from Southern Cal came strolling out of the kitchen—and he'd been back there for three or four hours! Unbeknownst to

me, he'd been back there *the whole time we had been there working on the parents*. He just came strolling out of the kitchen! And not only that, he was kin to this guy. *He was their cousin!* This dadgum coach was their cousin, and they told me the kid was going to Southern Cal! I had just made two trips to Atlanta—I had just flown all the way from Toledo, twice, to get this guy—and now, dang if the kid wasn't going to Southern Cal and his cousin was a USC coach. He signed right under my nose with USC, Marvin did. Later he became an All-American offensive tackle at Southern Cal and was a first-round draft pick for the New York Jets. That was all Marvin Powell did.

But I still had Steve Anderson.

Of course, as soon as I realized Marvin had left me at the altar, I was back on the phone. I mentioned arranging for Mike Corgan to go to Toledo and sign Steve Anderson while I was in Atlanta with Marvin. We had it all worked out. Corgan was going down from Detroit. I had asked Steve, "Hey, is it all right if Coach Corgan comes to sign you because I'm going to be in Atlanta?" Mike Corgan had been with me when we visited the kid before, and Steve had told me that was okay.

So I called back to the office in Lincoln, to see if Corgan had sent the stuff in, to see if the kid had signed yet. Don't you know, they told me, "No, Bill, you weren't there. Steve got mad. He signed with Michigan!" Corgan had gone down there, and Steve Anderson wouldn't sign because I wasn't there!

I got on the plane and headed back to Nebraska. I had four of the best recruits in the country in my sights, and I had lost them all. I had been going back and forth between Toledo and Atlanta like it was just going down to the Stadium. Zoom, zoom, zoom. Four flights in a twenty-four hour period. The only reason I was in Atlanta was Steve Anderson said it was okay to go, so I could sign this other guy. Dang if I hadn't lost them all.

Can you believe it?

I had Browner. I had Jeter. I had Powell. I had Anderson. Three of the four would go on to become All-Americans, and Powell and Browner would be two-timers. Browner won the Outland, the Maxwell, and the Lombardi, the top three awards a lineman can win! Three were first-round NFL draft picks—Powell at number four overall, Jeter at number five overall, and Browner at number eight overall! Powell played in five Pro Bowls. Jeter recorded seventy-nine sacks in the NFL! Can you imagine what those four would have done for the Nebraska program? I had them all. Then I had nothing! All I had left was to go back empty-handed with my tail between my legs, and face Tom Osborne.

Hardest Thing I Had to Do: Recruiting calls are not easy, despite what the Sports Center experts make it out to be. These are tough decisions, and with today's scholarship limits, there is no room for error. It is tough for an assistant coach when you want to take a kid but the head coach doesn't, or the other coaches don't. It is even tougher recruiting a former player's son. Coaches walk a fine line. It is easy when the kid is a standout, and everyone is after him. But what about the one who is on the edge? You have someone who has been loyal to the program, maybe made a name for the program, and he has a kid who maybe can play, maybe can't. What do you do? These are important calls, close calls, tough calls.

I chuckle when I see all the recruiting services ranking kids. Everyone messes up on some kids. Everyone misses some. Everyone makes decisions they would like to second-guess. I mean, they are kids. How many of you could predict what you will be in four years? How many of you know for sure how much you will grow, know for sure what your health will be, know for sure what your state of mind will be in four or five years? Everyone misses some. Ohio State has missed some.

Much was made of Justin Boren transferring from Michigan to Ohio State after his dad played "Up North." But Justin's dad Mike went to Eastmoor. Few know Mike's bedroom wall was full of Ohio State stuff. He wanted to be a Buckeye in the worst way. Our guy recruiting him kept saying this guy wants to come to Ohio State. We didn't offer him. That School Up North did, and there he went. In Mike's senior year up there, we went up to play in the Big House. Every player gets a game day program, and when we got up there that game program was sitting in every one of our lockers. Guess whose picture was on the front of the program! There was Mike Boren staring us in the face. And they beat us.

One of the hardest things I ever had to do was take a scholarship back from Bob Ferguson's son. We offered Bob's son a scholarship and then the "powers that be" decided we had to take it back. Bob Ferguson, two-time All-American at Ohio State! Finished second in the Heisman voting to Ernie Davis! I had to go to him and take that back. I was sitting at the state track meet talking to Bob. It was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. Bob said it wasn't right. I knew it wasn't right, but I was just the messenger. That is hard, when you want to take someone and others don't.

A similar thing happened with Aurelius Thomas's son. We offered him, and then it was changed. It was taken back. Aurelius Thomas. Ohio State All-American. College Football Hall of Fame. OSU Athletic Hall of Fame. Community volunteer. Columbus High School coach and teacher. That Aurelius Thomas. His son made us pay for that one. He went to Wisconsin, and when we went up there, his son had the game of his life.

Another time we went to see Archie's younger brother, Keith, who was also a running back. At the time, Ohio State thought he was too small, and they wanted him to walk on. Of course, he didn't walk on. He went on scholarship to the University of Miami in Florida, and the Hurricanes won a national championship while he was there. He was featured on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* when Miami had that dramatic one-point victory over number one ranked Nebraska in the Orange Bowl to win that championship. At one time, that game was voted the most exciting college football game ever played. Keith was the star on that team, the guy *Sports Illustrated* put on the cover, and we had passed on him! Later, he was drafted by the Washington Redskins. The Redskins won a Super Bowl while he was playing for them. Ohio State thought that Keith was too small—because when Eastmoor got down to the goal line, they didn't give the ball to him. At the time, I thought, why do they think that? Shoot, when Woody got down to the goal line, he didn't give the ball to Archie. He gave it to the fullbacks. Keith's coach at the time over at Eastmoor, Bob Stuart, was Woody's double. He did everything that Woody did. But because Eastmoor didn't give Keith

the ball on the goal line, they thought he was too small, and Ohio State passed on him.

I thought of that a while back when Coach Tressel offered Archie's son Adam a football scholarship. The armchair quarterbacks were soon going back and forth on that one. As I heard those things, I thought of all the autographs Archie has signed for not one dime. Thousands and thousands of them. I thought of all the money he has brought to this university. I thought of all the royalties of those #45 jerseys you still see worn in Ohio Stadium. All of that goes to student scholarships. Not one dime goes to Archie. Shucks, if the kid couldn't even run a hundred yards, Archie has paid for that scholarship a thousand times over. Of course, Coach was right. Now Adam is winning Special Teams Player of the Week awards on Urban's kick units.

Recruiting is hard. Recruiting is tough. Recruiting is an art. Recruiting is a roll of the dice. But when you hit snake eyes, and you get that blue chipper, and especially that Heisman Trophy winner, it makes it all worth it. There is no higher high than coaching around a Heisman guy. Let me tell you about the ones I have been lucky enough to know.

YOU WIN WITH PEOPLE

Act II—Heisman Guys

One of the bona fide thrills in coaching is the privilege to rub shoulders with a Heisman Trophy winner. Although I didn't coach any directly, I have been around four of them. They taught me a lot. Guys who win Heismans are super competitive. You can't imagine it. They are made from different genes. They don't want anyone to beat them doing anything. You can't beat them eating an ice cream cone. If you can jump 100 inches, they can jump 101. If you can do this, they can do it better. You don't win the Heisman without being a very competitive person.

Woody called it toughness. "Is he tough enough to play at this level?" he would ask. Johnny Rodgers. Archie Griffin. Eddie George. Troy Smith. Whichever winner you want to name. They are competitive. They have their own ideas and they didn't get up there just by listening to everybody. They have a lot of natural ability, and they figure their way is the best, so you have to work hard to coach that kind of guy. Some of the guys I coached were like that. Sometimes you changed some of their techniques and other times you didn't. I have seen coaches who could stand up to them and coaches who couldn't. It's hard to stand up to some of those guys who have been so successful. "I'm the number one recruit in the whole country," they think. "How are you are going to tell me something?" A coach has something on his hands with these kinds of guys. It's an experience. Woody was right when he asked about the candidate for Sarkkinen's coaching vacancy: "Is he tough enough to coach here?"

The elite guys don't want to get beat playing marbles. They are competitive to the grave. I listened to Michael Jordan the night he was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame. Jordan talked about when he was a freshman back at North Carolina. The team picture that year only showed four starters. Coach Dean Smith didn't feel he needed a freshman on the cover of the program, so Michael was left out. Michael Jordan still remembered that and talked about it at his induction that night. Some thought it small, but to me, it showed that he held it inside all those years. All that time and he still remembered that. It is an example of how competitive those guys are. I experienced this clear back as a high school coach going down to the Kansas City Chiefs' training camp and standing behind the Chiefs' bench during home games. In going out with the Chiefs' Buck Buchannan, and Bobby Bell, I could see how competitive those guys were, all the time, and in everything. If we were eating barbeque ribs, these guys could finish theirs before you finished yours. If you ate a slab, they could eat a slab and a half.

People don't understand; they don't understand the difference between Division I football and all the rest. Division I basketball and all the rest. Pro football and Division I football. Pro basketball. Pro baseball. You don't get

there by being a little lollipop. You have to be so competitive to make it. It is that and more with the Heisman. I'll share four examples.

Johnny: The first Heisman guy I knew personally was Johnny Rodgers at Nebraska. Johnny was a great athlete. He could stop on a dime and give you ten pennies. He was something, the confidence that he had. J.R. we called him. He could do it all. One-handed catches. Make you miss. Leave you holding nothing but your jock strap. I saw him make guys just hug their numbers in practice. Johnny Rodgers was one of the most athletic players I have known, and had the most control of his body of any football player that I have been around. At five-foot-nine with heels on his boots, he was small, maybe a 168 pounds. The press guide said he weighed 175, but that was with knives and forks in his pocket.

Bob Devaney told me something amazing about Johnny one day in the equipment room. Devaney had a small foot; he wore a size seven or seven-and-a-half shoe. So did Johnny. Bob was talking to the equipment guy and said to me, "Now, Bill, you don't want too many of these size sevens. You don't want to give out too many of these; you want to give out those size 13s, 14s, and 15s!"

"What about Johnny," I laughed.

"You can't have a whole team full of Johnnys," Bob answered.

Now, Johnny tried to get out of practice all the time. Something was always "bothering" him. He was always in the trainer's room, trying to get them to release him from practice, and at his size, maybe he did hurt. They would let him out occasionally. But usually the trainer would say, "You gotta go, John, you gotta go." So Johnny would practice and then put on a show like you couldn't believe! He didn't want to practice, but once you got him on the field there wasn't going to be anybody better than him. No matter what day, or how he felt. No matter how much he didn't want to practice. If they didn't let Johnny out of practice that day, why, you never before saw an athlete like him during that practice. He had this pride and determination. No one was better than Johnny Rodgers when he got inside those white lines. That is what I remember most about Johnny. Every day, Johnny went out there to put on a show. *"Okay, they won't let me out, so I'm going to put on a show like they have never seen before."*

I remember Johnny standing on the sideline one game, when the defense was on the field. It was early in my Nebraska stint. He was standing next to me, prancing and pacing, and hollering at the Blackshirts. "You guys gotta get the ball. Get the ball. Get the ball. Defense, come on now, get the ball!" he kept screaming. "*People around here expect me to do a miracle and I can't do a miracle till I get the ball!* Get the ball, Rich." Then he was screaming at Willie Harper, "Get the ball, Willie!" Rich and Willie were returning All-Americans, and he was hollering at them. That was Johnny. He really thought he was going to do a miracle. I was standing there next to him thinking, "Hey, this guy is intense." Some of the second teamers were looking at him as if he was nuts, but Johnny was serious. Deadly serious. He really believed that. It just showed the confidence he had in himself. All the great ones have that kind of confidence, and Johnny had confidence like you couldn't believe.

Johnny was a tremendous punt returner. Tom Osborne wrote in *More Than Winning* that Rodgers was the greatest punt returner he ever saw. I saw Johnny make one of the greatest punt returns ever. He made six or seven guys miss him between the hash marks and the sideline. I saw him return a kickoff, or a punt, I forget which, into our south end zone at Nebraska and he turned around at about the 25-yard line and backed in. He was that good. He was just something else. I saw him on TV take one back against Oklahoma in 1971 during the then "Game of the Century." You know who he made miss him? Gregg Pruitt, the Oklahoma All-American. Gregg was the first guy down and Johnny made him miss. When you can make the first guy miss, you can get to the wall, and that is what Johnny did, and he took it all the way. Nebraska won that game 35-31, and that day became a team with a national following.

I can remember playing Notre Dame in the January 1973 Orange Bowl, for many reasons. It was my first bowl. Roberto Clemente died in the plane crash the night before that game. It was Bob Devaney's last game as the Nebraska coach. It was also Johnny Rodgers' last game. Johnny had been sick while we were practicing in Miami. Rufus Ferguson ("The Roadrunner" as he was called) played for Wisconsin but lived in Florida, so he came to visit Johnny at our hotel. Rufus was telling a sick Johnny Rodgers, "You aren't that good. I should have won the Heisman, not you." Rufus was all over Johnny's case in the days before the game, pulling Johnny's chain and the like.

"*I'm going to put on a show like you have never seen before,*" Johnny said to Rufus, just like that. His confidence just oozed out.

Now, Johnny was one of those guys who threw up before every game. He was always strung that high. Coach Devaney would give his pre-game talk to the team, and he would talk until Johnny would throw up, and then Coach would scream "*Okay, let's go get 'em,*" and we would run onto the field. But Bob would always wait for Johnny to throw up. You could see Bob walking back and forth, watching Johnny, and waiting for Johnny to throw up before he pronounced his *Go Get 'Em!*

Well, that night at the Orange Bowl, Devaney gave his talk and as usual, Johnny did his deal about throwing up. We got out on the field and lined up. Notre Dame was kicking off to us. As they were playing the national anthem, I was watching Johnny standing back there on the goal line, when whoosh, he threw up again. It just came pouring out through his facemask. I can remember when we saw that, the guys on the sideline saying, "Johnny's going to put on a show like you have never seen."

He did. Johnny Rodgers scored five touchdowns that night. Five touchdowns! He ran for three, caught a 50-yard pass for another, and threw a 54-yard touchdown pass for the fifth. He did all that and never played the last third of the game! Devaney showed mercy and pulled him with twenty-one minutes left to play. No Heisman Trophy winner had ever finished his career in that fashion. We demolished Notre Dame 40-6 that night, and it was all because Rufus Ferguson was talking smack to Johnny Rodgers in the days before the game. From a hospital bed, to throwing up, to Orange Bowl MVP, it was a spectacle befitting the Heisman Trophy he won that year, and a fitting end to a college career of the player later voted the Most Valuable Player in Big Eight Conference history.

Johnny is one of those many guys for whom college football meant an education and a ticket up and out of the neighborhood. He came out of the well-known Owens Technical School in Omaha. At one time, that school had an enrollment of 3,600 students. It produced numerous famous graduates, including former Mayor of Omaha John Rosenblatt, Senator Roman Hruska, pitcher Bob Gibson, Tuskegee Airman Captain Alfonza Davis, and Olympian medalist Bob Boozer. Johnny's mother was a teenager when he was born. Johnny didn't know his father. Johnny knew Mama and Grandma; that was it, those were the people who raised Johnny. He lived in a tough section of Omaha. You cannot play football like Johnny Rodgers if you are not a tough kid. I mean, we had him in the program at five-foot-ten and that was generous by a couple of inches. You have to be a tough kid to play that kind of football at that size and Johnny did it, going on to play professionally in the Canadian Football League.

People outside of Nebraska know Johnny for his Heisman, but not everyone knows he has degrees in broadcast journalism and advertising. As I write this, Johnny is a businessman in Omaha working in community and public relations, mentoring youth. He works with Tom Osborne, encouraging athletes who have dropped out of school to return to Nebraska and complete their education. In addition, his Johnny Rodgers Youth Foundation provides educational and social development opportunities for at-risk youth. Johnny has surely made Mama and Grandma proud. He is one more example of the role of athletics in providing opportunity.

Ironically, Devaney once said something interesting about Johnny Rodgers. "You know," he told me, "if we weren't taking ninety-five players on scholarship then, we might not have taken Johnny Rodgers." When they get down to the numbers they can take now, how can you take a 165-pound kid who wears a size seven shoe? How can you take a kid that size? You don't know he is going to score fifty touchdowns in three years. You don't know he is going to win the Heisman. What can you do when you can only have seventy-five players total on scholarship? How can you take a guy like him? Well, you can when he is a Johnny Rodgers!

Archie: Johnny Rodgers was the first Heisman guy I knew, and Archie was the second. Of course, with Archie, no last name is needed. It's like all the great ones. Ali. Tiger. Jordan. LeBron. One word will do. With Buckeye fans, Archie is all you need to say.

You can't talk about Archie Griffin, the Heisman Winner, without talking about Archie the person. Archie is one of the humblest, hardest working, best known athletes of my lifetime, and I have crossed paths with many great ones. I first met Archie when I came to Ohio State. Of course, he was through playing here by then, and was the running back for the Cincinnati Bengals. People remember Archie for his Heismans, but they forget that when he retired from the Bengals, he was their fourth all-time rusher and fifth all-time receiver.

Archie is a modest person. He's a Christian. Like Tom Osborne, Archie never uses profanity. As a player, he always gave other people credit. Archie was not a braggadocio; he just always gave compliments to his teammates.

Archie is a guy who will give you the shirt off his back. He will work for you. At the same time, he will stand up for his principles, and he seldom is going to let you see his anger.

Johnny Rodgers and Archie Griffin were night and day, but they were alike in two ways. They were both as competitive as you will ever see, and they both played bigger than their size. I told you of Johnny's size seven shoes. Well, Archie Griffin played at only five-foot-eight and 180 pounds or so. They both won Heismans despite their stature.

I came to know Archie personally, when he joined our athletic department staff. He is just a completely different kind of guy than other Heisman guys. Archie's first job at Ohio State was in another area of the university, working with Madison Scott. Then they wanted to bring Archie into the athletic department. But Woody had always told us never to let them do that. He thought it would not be in Archie's best interests. Some of the people then were not Woody's people, and Woody wanted to look out for Archie. So one evening, Jim Jones and I went to Woody's house to talk about bringing Archie into athletics. Being one of Woody's guys—and I consider myself one of Woody's guys—you never wanted to do something without him knowing, and without seeing if he thought it was the right thing. Some of the people here at the time were not Woody's people, even though Woody still had an office over at the ROTC building. But I still valued his advice and counsel. Anne usually didn't sit in on our conversations, but she was there that night and she joined us when we started talking about Archie. Woody and Anne talked about it between the two of them. Woody didn't want us to mess over Archie and was very concerned that Archie would just be used.

"We're not going to mess him over, Coach. You know we wouldn't let that happen," we told Woody.

When we left that evening, Woody said that was good, and Anne agreed. And that was how Archie came over to the athletic department. He just dug into it and took off. First, he was in fundraising, and he did a great job at that. Then he said he wanted to get into the athletic administration part of it. He took over the sports that I had when Andy Geiger was here, after Andy asked me to start the outreach program.

Archie proved himself as an administrator, when people might have thought they brought him in just as a PR person because of the Heismans. Archie was a typical Woody Hayes guy. Although he had many natural abilities, Archie too was of the mindset that nobody was going to outwork him. Archie was a great competitor, and he was going to fight tooth and nail. He worked at administration with the same intensity as he approached football. Of course it has paid off, just as it did on the playing field. Now he is CEO of the Alumni Association, a network of 500,000 Buckeyes, and a vice president of the university. The ballroom in the new Student Union is named the Archie Griffin Ballroom. Archie's college teammates donated that in his honor. That says a lot!

Archie earned everything he got. When Archie was a little kid, he actually was a guard, a lineman, because he was too chubby to play running back. In *Archie,* Dave Diles wrote that when Archie was nine years old, "he didn't get to play too much." He quotes Archie as saying, "I was a fat, dumpy little kid

and the kids called me 'Tank'." Imagine that. The little kid who was a lineman later had such tremendous balance as a college running back. You could see that in the way he would get knocked sideways and always come down on his feet.

Archie likes to tell the story of practicing in his sweat suit in his backyard to lose weight so he could play in junior high, because he had to make the weight limits. His family had an old car in the back, and as Archie explained, "the windows were gone and the tires flat." He would get in that hot car on a summer day and do push-ups and sit-ups. He told Diles, "I'd get these plastic bags from the dry cleaners, and I'd wrap myself up in them and sweat so much the plastic would melt." That is one way Archie Griffin got to where he is today.

Archie once told me how he learned to make speeches after he became an administrator. It was the same approach and intensity. He told me he read books on making speeches, and practiced that, and got better. You can look at some of his older speeches on tape and see how he has grown. Archie is that kind of guy, a person who works at whatever he does.

Archie is very family oriented and he talks about his dad a lot. His parents raised an amazing family. I told you about meeting them when I recruited Raymond. The Griffin family roots are found in the coalfields of Logan, West Virginia. It was a hard life. Archie is named after his grandfather, Archie Mason Griffin, who was a coal miner and spent long days in the mines. Archie's father, James Griffin, was one of six children. Three of James' siblings did not survive childhood. When James was just four years old, his mother, Archie's grandmother, died in childbirth. Life was tough during those depression years, especially in the coal towns of Appalachia. Think of what Archie has accomplished just two generations removed from that!

James Griffin met Archie's mother Margaret in high school, and they married when she was sixteen. Archie's dad had made up his mind he wanted no part of the miner's life, but when he came back from the service he got a job above ground loading coal into railroad cars. Later, though, he went back into the mine to better provide for his family. Eventually, James Griffin decided he had had enough. He moved the family to Columbus where, in 1954, Archie was born. There would eventually be seven kids—six sons and a daughter. To provide, James usually worked two or three jobs. Work and family were Archie's parents' priorities.

Each of the Griffin children inherited those ethics, and all ended up getting a college scholarship. Every one. Jim was a halfback at Muskingum, Larry a fullback at Louisville, and Daryle a defensive back at Kent State. Of course, Archie, Raymond, and Duncan played for the Buckeyes, and then Keith was on the national championship team in Miami, Florida. Archie's sister Krystal ran track on a scholarship at my alma mater, Drake University. No wonder Archie is a humble person.

If you had never heard of Archie, you would not know upon meeting him all that he has accomplished. I'll share a story illustrating that. One time we were up at Michigan State for a football game. I was in athletic administration, over housing for the team then, so I still traveled with the team. Archie traveled with them as well, so Archie and I were eating breakfast in the hotel

restaurant that morning before the game. The restaurant was full, and as we were sitting there eating, a guy we didn't know asked if he could join us. We said sure, and the fellow sat down at our table and started talking as if we had been lifelong friends. Before I knew it, this guy was telling us how great a high school running back he had been. "Gained eighty yards in this game," he said, "gained seventy-five in another. Had two touchdowns against so and so. Had another game where they held me to forty-five yards, but that was because the coach didn't give me the ball. Boom, next game I bounced back and gained a hundred yards." This guy was telling us all about it. There we were, eating breakfast, and a guy we didn't even know was replaying his entire high school football career for us!

Archie just sat there and listened, occasionally saying to the gentleman, "That's great, man! That's great." As we sat there eating, other people in the room started to notice Archie. And they started coming over to our table. It began with one autograph, then another, and soon there was a line. You can probably picture this long line and Archie just sitting there signing autographs. He would sign a couple and then eat a bite, sign another one and eat some more, and all the while, this guy we didn't know was still talking to us about how great a running back he was in high school. Archie just sat there, trying to eat his breakfast, signing autographs, and at the same time still telling this guy, *"That's great, man!"*

The guy wasn't letting us get a word in. He just kept telling us how good he was. And it was all about high school! And Archie kept saying, *"That's great, man! That's good!"* By this time, the line was *really long*, and Archie was just signing as fast as he could. Boom. Boom. Boom. Finally, this guy shut up, turned to me with a puzzled look, and nodding towards Archie, leaned over and whispered in my ear, "*Who is that?*"

I whispered back to him, calmly and with a straight face, "*That's Archie Griffin, two-time Heisman Trophy winner.*"

The guy spit out his breakfast onto his plate. "*That's Archie Griffin?*" he murmured. "*And I'm sitting here telling him I gained this and I gained that!*" The guy knew what Archie had done. "*He went thirty-one straight games where he gained a hundred yards, and I'm telling him I did this and I did that!*" this guy continued in horror. He wished he could crawl under the table.

That is the Archie I know. Archie could have embarrassed the man, but he didn't. He could have ignored the guy or put on the dog, but he didn't. He sat there and politely listened and made the gentleman feel special. With someone of Archie's stature, it takes a humble person to do that. Don't confuse humility with lack of intensity. One of his favorite sayings is, *"It's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog."* If you've heard him speak, you have heard him use that. He got that from his high school coach, Bob Stuart, and you hear Archie use that over and over in his speeches. But it is true, and Archie is the living example of that. How many people playing at 5'8" and 180 pounds have won one Heisman Trophy, let alone two? In *The Archie Griffin Story*, Archie wrote, "*The more I heard that I couldn't make it, the more I was determined to do it. I never liked being told that I'm not good enough to do this or that.*"

That sums him up. Archie is a nice guy, but he is also one of the most

competitive people I know. Up at Bill Willis High School in Delaware, there was a guy that once pinned Archie in wrestling. He wasn't a state wrestling champion or anything, but he got his picture up in their Hall of Fame, just because he pinned Archie Griffin. Archie and I roomed together on the road trips, and one morning in our hotel room, I pulled Archie's chain. I grinned at him, "Archie, you weren't such a hot shot. Why, over at Bill Willis High School, I saw they have a picture of a guy up in the hallway. It's up there because he pinned you! They put his picture up, just because the guy pinned Archie Griffin."

Arch got excited. He leaned forward on the edge of his bed. The veins bulged in his neck. "He might have done that to me one time," he came back. "Yeah, he pinned me," Arch admitted. "One time. I tried to make a move, and it backfired so he caught me. It was just one time." Then he went on, "*But the next year, I got him back! I threw him down and I let him back up, I threw him down and let him back up, I threw him down and let him back up . . .*"

I tell people about that and they say to me, "No, not Archie Griffin." I laugh at them. You don't get to be an Archie Griffin without being very competitive. You have to live and die competition to become an Archie. Another time we flew over to Purdue. At that time, Archie had the job that I used to have; he was responsible for the planes and travel arrangements. I had gone over early and Archie brought a group later. When they left Columbus, Archie told the people they could get on the plane, because someone outside told him the group could go on up the ramp and get on the plane. The pilot didn't like that and chewed Archie out. It may have embarrassed him. I know it made him angry. That night Archie was telling me about it in our room. "I hope that same guy flies the plane back!" Arch said. "I hope it is the same guy! I owe him."

Well, the same guy did fly our plane back to Columbus. Archie and I usually sat in the back, and when they let the tail down, we usually were the first ones off, through the back of the plane. This time, Archie said, "I'm going to wait. I have to see this pilot! I owe him." I had better wait, too, I thought, not knowing what was going to happen. So we both waited. Everybody got off the plane but Archie and me. Archie went up to the front of the plane this time, and I followed him up. Archie leaned over, right next to that pilot, right in his face, and shook his finger at him, "Don't you *ever* do that to me again! I will stomp you if you *ever* do that again to me. I did *exactly* what *your guy* told me to do. Your guy told me to let the people on the plane. That's what I did, so don't you ever do that to me again."

He had been brooding about that ever since Friday morning, and this was Saturday evening after we had won the game over at Purdue. Now, he didn't do anything in front of anybody. But he had to set the record straight with that guy.

Archie is probably the most popular star that you will ever see. None of the guys on Archie's team will ever talk bad about him, and that is not true with some other All-Americans. Archie would have been a three-time Most Valuable Player at Ohio State, but Archie voted for Cornelius Greene, so Cornelius got the MVP award that year. It was a tie without Archie's vote. If he had voted for himself, he would have won it. But he was close to Cornelius,

and his was the deciding vote for his roommate Corny Greene to win the award.

Archie signs autographs all the time. He has probably signed more autographs than some two or three other Heisman winners combined. There is one day a week that he signs autographs in the Alumni House. There might be eighty or ninety balls, old *Sports Illustrated* programs from the time he was on the cover, hats, pictures, and things like that. An assistant is standing there reading off to him each name, telling him now this is for so and so. He signs it. Archie once told me, "My autograph is not going to be worth anything until I die." Other guys sell theirs, but Archie has given away thousands and thousands of them free. Sometimes Archie and I would be at St. John Arena before football games and we would head over through the crowd to the Stadium. As we would go across, I would say to him, "Come on Arch, keep moving. Come on Arch, let's go, don't stop, keep moving." He would keep moving, signing autographs as he was walking, because if he stopped, I knew they had him. He would never have gotten to the Stadium.

Archie works harder than anybody I have ever seen, and he is good with math. Give him some figures and boom, he has them added up just like that. People who don't know Archie might think he got where he is riding his Heismans. Nothing is further from the truth. Archie is shrewd with numbers, a good businessman, a good manager. He has worked his way up, worked from the ground up, to become CEO of the Alumni Association. And he has earned every bit of it. Yet Archie is one of those persons who can joke with himself. I was reading Thomas Henderson's book. The All-Pro linebacker with the Dallas Cowboys told about the time Archie caught a screen pass, writing, "I hit him so hard I knocked his Heismans right off the shelf!"

I told Archie about that and Archie said, "That's true. They hung me out to dry. They threw the ball way up high, and when I went up for it, I knew I was a goner. I should have *gatored it.*" Of course, the joke is gators have short arms, and as Arch said that, he held his palms out about shoulder high. So gatored it meant let it go right by him. That was what Archie was saying; he should have let it go right by. But he didn't. He caught it and took the hit.

I wouldn't have expected anything different from the Archie Griffin I know. How else would you get to be the only two-time recipient of the Heisman Trophy? How else would you be a three-time All-American? How else would you be only one of two people to start four Rose Bowl games? And best of all, how else would you, in four years, never lose to that School Up North!

Eddie: Eddie George. Everyone knows Eddie's background. He came out of Philadelphia and went to Fork Union Military Academy in Virginia. Eddie was a guy who worked and worked, but he didn't know how to compete for the job, and there was a time that he thought he was getting the shaft. Eddie came in then, and talked to me about how he could do this and he could do that, but he wasn't appreciated by the Ohio State coaches. I went back to my days of learning to compete at Lincoln High. I said to Eddie, "I'll tell you what. If I were the backfield coach, I would grade you when you are running with the first team, and I would grade the other guy when he was running with the first team. For me, it would be, how many yards do you make after

contact? How many fumbles do you make? How many missed assignments do you have? And so forth and so on." I told him all the things I would grade a running back on, all the things he needed to prove he could do.

"Yeah," Eddie said.

I went on, "If I were you, I would go ask Coach Spencer, 'What is it I have to do to start here?' I would tell him, 'I know the other guy can do this, I know the other guy can do that. But Coach, I can do this and I can do that.' And I would ask him, 'What is it that I have to do to start?' Don't knock the guy that he has playing in front of you," I said to Eddie. "You put the coach on the defensive. Instead, ask him what you have to do."

I used to do as a coach what I told Eddie. I would get the second team guys to talk to me. I would have the second-string tackles and tight ends eat with me at the training table on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I would ask them what they thought their good qualities were. Why should I play them? What could they do for the team? I told Eddie guys would tell me things, and I would think, hmm, that guy can do that. I came up with a thing I called the "Four Ts" as a result of this. When we got to the 20-yard line, we would holler "Four Ts," and Earle would let me put in four tackles at one time. We would move Bill Roberts out to a tight end and bring in the second-string left tackle, and move the other right tackle out and bring the other second-string tackle in, and we would just ram the ball into the end zone. I got that from asking the second teamers what they could do.

When we finished our conversation, Eddie was going to go over and talk to Tim Spencer. Of course, I wasn't coaching at the time, so before Eddie could get over there, I called Coach Spence and put a bug in his ear. I told him what I had told Eddie, how I would grade him and such, so Spence knew. Well, Tim Spencer told Eddie all those same things, and Eddie listened, and Eddie George just took off after that. I am not saying this to claim that I put Eddie George on the road to a Heisman. Rather, I am illustrating how so many people don't know how to compete.

Remember, I explained that I played tailback in high school, and asked Coach, "What do I have to do to start next year. Where can I start?" I've shared that I changed positions when Coach told me, "You can have a chance at guard." I told you how every time we ran wind sprints, I would line up next to the guy that was first-string guard. Every time we went one-on-one in blocking drills, I would be on defense against that first string guard and on offense against that guy. I would cut line so I came up against him. Let me in here, I would tell the guys. I was going to show that coach that I could whip his number one guy. Or, if his guy whipped me, I had nothing left to say, the coach was right all the time. Well, I told Eddie all about that, and the next thing you knew, Eddie just took off. At the end of his career, there was the Heisman with his name on it. Eddie George had learned how to compete.

Troy: I was out of football when Troy Smith came along, so I didn't interact with him as I did with Archie and Eddie. But I did talk with Troy at times early in his career, and encouraged him to keep his head up because he, too, thought he was getting the shaft at times. Of course, most of them think like that. If you are not playing, and you are a competitive person, you are

thinking you are getting the shaft. But like I said, a lot of time, the younger guys don't yet know how to compete. I think that might have been true in Troy's case as well. He was running around doing all these things with his legs, when that wasn't what the coach wanted. But when he got to the point where he did what the coach wanted, when he learned to stand in that pocket and do his reads first, Troy Smith took off too.

You have to give Coach Tressel and his staff some of the credit for that as well. I remember the spring game early in Troy's career, when Coach Tressel put in the rule that the quarterback could not run. Troy was upset. Sports writers were upset. Fans were upset. All Troy could do that spring game was stand in the pocket. But you know what? They were not upset in 2005, when Troy Smith stood in the pocket up at the Big House and completed those critical passes on that long TD drive in the closing minutes to win that Michigan game. Troy Smith won the Heisman by developing into the quarterback Coach Tressel wanted him to be. He learned how to compete in the system the coach was running. With all the great ones, that is what it's about. Competing!

YOU WIN WITH PEOPLE

Act III—Buckeye Greats

Nebraska had their All-Americans, but so did Ohio State. I was privileged to be around so many great Buckeye athletes, certainly too many to talk about them all, even at just the offensive line positions I coached. Chris Ward and Joe Robinson were tackles. There was Doug Mackie, Mark Kerowicz, and Rory Graves. Jimmy Moore was a tight end. I had Greg Storer, a tight end, who draws portraits of the players elected into the Ohio State Hall of Fame. Bill Jaco, Ron Barwig, Brad Dwelle, and Judd Groza were all tight ends. There were guards Joe Lukens and of course Jim Lachey. Then there was John Frank, Bill Roberts, Jim Carson, Keith Ferguson, and Ken Fritz. Many of these guys were two- and three-year lettermen. Several were All-Conference. Three were All-Americans. And then we had guys I didn't coach directly but did influence—the great backs and defensive guys like Keith Byars, Art Schlichter, Jerome Foster, Todd Bell, and Luther Henson. I was around so many great players and great people that I should share memories of some who stand out for a variety of reasons.

84Y Shallow—John Frank: I said John Frank was the smartest, hardest working player I have ever been around. I told you what John wanted to be. Today he is just that, a practicing surgeon. I told about that day of Yom Kippur. I haven't told you, though, how he scored those two TDs in Norman, Oklahoma, and all those other Buckeye TDs that made him a second-round draft pick. I haven't told you about 84Y Shallow.

84Y Shallow was John Frank's play. It was a sprint draw with the receivers crossing, John coming from the right side and Gary Williams from the left. It was an easy read for the quarterback because both receivers were in his line of sight. It was effective against those Oklahoma defenses we were seeing then with the two inside linebackers. If the linebacker stayed shallow, we would throw it deep to Gary Williams. If he dropped, John Frank would get the ball underneath and just chew up yards after the catch.

What made that play work was the ability to read the coverage, and John Frank was one of the best I ever had at slowing the game down and recognizing defenses. It goes back to his work I told you about in practice. When John saw Cover-2, he knew he could catch the ball and continue running. But if John would come out and there was no one outside, he knew it was three guys deep in the middle. He knew it was Cover-3. He knew to throttle down when he got in line with the opposite guard, just past the center, because there was a defender waiting for him, waiting to knock John's head off. John would throttle down and catch the ball. John was great at making that read, and that is what made 84Y Shallow a bread and butter play for the Buckeyes.

John Frank ran that play to perfection, and when he was there, the Buckeyes rode that big tight end to a lot of TDs and a lot of victories. John Frank and 84Y Shallow. Outstanding football player. Dynamite play.

Anybody Can Get the Ball In—Keith Byars: Keith Byars was an exceptional player, and I explained how he led the comeback against Illinois. Keith was more than an exceptional athlete, though. Keith is an exceptional person. Very religious, Keith is what I call a P-K, a Preacher's Kid. Keith went to Roth High School in Dayton, Ohio. Of course, no one in high school dared call him P-K. Keith was huge. He wore a size fourteen shoe, weighed 235 pounds, and played tailback. He had huge hands and wore a size fifteen ring. Keith didn't lift his legs up. He just shuttled along, yet he could run a 4.4 forty. He was on a state championship basketball team, a state championship track team, and batted over .400 in baseball. Keith was an athlete.

When Keith was at Dayton Roth, they won all levels of championships in all three sports in the Dayton City League. Their freshman, junior varsity, and varsity each won football, basketball, and track championships. Nine championships! Dayton closed that school to break things up. If you were a coach at one of the other schools in Dayton, you had to be saying to yourself, "Man, we can't win this thing for a long time. Their varsity won it, their junior varsity won it, and their freshman won it. All of their kids are beating our kids."

Keith Byars initially played tight end in high school. But in his junior year, they were working on goal line offense, and their running back couldn't get it in. Keith said to his coach, "Anybody can get that ball in. I could get the ball in."

The coach thought the kid was bragging or something and was going to teach him a lesson. He told Keith, "If it's so easy, you get back there." Well, Keith got back there and just ran over everybody. That is how they discovered Keith Byars. They were working on punching it in from the five and Keith just ran over everybody.

Keith Byars and Cris Carter are the only two guys I have seen, other than Johnny Rodgers, who could make the other players clap in practice. One day, we were working on the practice field at the Biggs facility. I can still see it. We were running plays towards the south. Keith ran out to the left flat, and we threw him a little flair pass. He reached back behind himself with one hand, and the point of the ball just stuck in the palm of his hand. One handed! He caught the ball one-handed, behind him, with just the point of the ball sticking in his hand. The guys just started clapping. With hands that took a size fifteen ring, he could do that! About twice a week Keith would do something that would make the guys just stop and clap.

People remember the Illinois game, and that run without his shoe is one of the all-time memories of Ohio Stadium. But the bigger play that day, as I have told you, was his fifth touchdown from three yards out, with the game tied at 38 and just 36 ticks left on the clock. When Keith punched it in that day, we won one of the greatest comebacks in Ohio State history. And it all started back at Dayton Roth, that day he told his coach, "Anybody can get that ball in." When the coach challenged him to prove it, it was another

Eddie Robinson moment, and the coach found out "What can he do?" But for that, Keith Byars might never have been in the Buckeye backfield!

I'll Take Him—Keith Ferguson: I took guys other coaches didn't want. I just gobbled guys up. Whenever other people didn't want them, I said, "Give 'em to me." Keith Ferguson is an example. He came here wanting to be a linebacker. When Keith got here, though, the coach on the defensive side of the ball said, "He can't play over here."

"I'll take him," I said. Just like that, Keith came over to the offensive line. He was maybe six-foot-five and 225 pounds, and that was if he had a book or something in his back pocket. I told Keith never put anything under 228 up on the board. I told him to keep it up there. When Keith first came to the Buckeyes, I took him down to the locker room and introduced him to Chris Ward. "Ferg," I said, "this is Chris Ward. He's an All-American tackle and we think he's pretty good."

Keith Ferguson said, "Oh, I don't know about that. He hasn't been up against me yet!"

"Oh my gosh," I thought. Keith was an incoming freshman, and there he was calling out Chris Ward, the best lineman I ever coached! He called him out! But I liked that, and I remembered it when they didn't want him on defense. Keith worked his way up to be second-string behind Chris that first year as a freshman.

That was Chris's senior year, and the next year Ferg was going to be my starter as a sophomore. But Coach Hayes didn't think he was big enough to start. We were playing Penn State and Keith was going to face Matt Millen, the guy who is a color commentator on ABC TV now. Matt was an All-American for the Nittany Lions then. Woody kept talking about Matt Millen. Millen this, Millen that. Finally, I had had enough. I called Woody out in our coaches' meeting. "I'll tell you what, Coach," I told Woody, "if we lose this game because of what Matt Millen does to Keith Ferguson, I will give you one month's salary back!" Apparently, that convinced Woody that I was confident in Keith because he backed off.

Keith started that Saturday against the Nittany Lions. You know who got lineman of the week? Keith Ferguson! He whipped Matt Millen unmercifully. Of course, Woody saw it all because *he was looking at Keith every single play.* He wanted to make sure Keith wasn't going to beat us, so Woody was watching Keith like a hawk looking for a field mouse. I am so glad Keith came through, and not just because of the month's salary. I'm glad he came through because on the other side, their tackle Bruce Clark whipped my other tackle Joe Robinson so bad! Millen was the guy they were all talking about before the game, but Bruce Clark was the guy that ate my other tackle's lunch. Woody did not see it, though, because he was so focused on making sure Keith Ferguson did not get him beat! Thanks to Keith, Joe and I both dodged a bullet. Bruce Clark did not just eat us up that year; he went on to win the Lombardi Trophy and played eight seasons in the NFL. He was good.

The next year Earle came in, and Keith wanted to try defense again. Once again they said he couldn't do it, and they sent him back over to me. Keith said, "Coach, I really like you, I respect you, I know I can play for you, but

I'm not going to play offense. I'm going back to Florida if they don't let me try on defense." There was no doubt Keith meant it. Woody had once told me, "You coach Keith Ferguson, Bill, because he sure doesn't listen to me!" So they finally let him try defense. He ended up starting at defensive end his junior and senior year. Then he was drafted by the pros and he played defensive end for ten years in the NFL! I wanted to ask the other coaches, what is it about this guy that you don't see?

A couple of years ago Keith came back to visit. He hasn't changed, and as we were talking, he bragged to me, "You know I always wanted to be an offensive tackle."

"Ferg, don't give me that stuff," I shot right back.

"Yes," he said, "that's what I played. I never played defense in high school. I played offensive tackle."

"Yeah," I reminded him, "and then you started for me and then you didn't want to play on offense."

"No, no," he said, "they put me over there on the defensive side."

"Ferg, you've got it all mixed up," I told him. "Do you think I would have ever given up a starter to those guys on the other side of the ball?" Keith told me he thought he might have played offense in the pros, and I laughed. "Keith, at 225 you didn't have enough lead in your pencil to play offensive tackle in the pros." Keith was one tough kid, though. Woody made his players hit in warm-ups before every game. They don't do that now, but we did. Boom. We had to get four good hits in pregame. Ferg would get his faceguard knocked down and would be bleeding, and the game hadn't even started yet. He was always ready to hit. That's how Keith Ferguson played bigger than his size, and that's how he played ten years in the NFL. All because I said, "I'll take him."

The Way It's Gonna Be—Joe Robinson: Joe Robinson was one of the guys Coach Hayes showed me when he was trying to pry me away from Nebraska. Joe's legs were as big as tree trunks, and sometimes we had to cut his football pants to get those legs in them. Joe was a talented guy. But Joe was not a good guy to play for Coach Hayes because he was a person who asked a lot of questions! Joe always wanted to know why. I didn't mind it because I thought it made me a better coach. I had to have a reason for doing something, so I didn't mind telling him why. Of course, Field General Hayes did mind. Woody didn't like people questioning him and Joe certainly did that.

Joe Robinson started for us his junior and senior year. He made All-Conference his senior year after Chris Ward left. He was our stud tackle that next year. Joe was very athletic, and could stretch his body in many different ways for being as muscular as he was in his legs and arms. This guy with legs as big as tree trunks, with a body that was 6'5" and 265 pounds, could do cartwheels. He was athletic! Even so, I had to fight Woody to get Joe in the lineup. Coach liked Joe, but he liked another guy and thought that guy was better. He wanted the other guy to start. I had to get them all together in a room—Woody and the two players—and explain to them how it was going to be. Imagine facing that.

I used the PNP approach I have talked about before—you always tell them

two positives and a negative. First, I told the other guy the two positives, and poor Joe was sitting over there thinking, "Dadgum, I thought I was going to start." Then I told him the negative. Next I started on Joe with his positives. Finally, I told them, "This is the way it's going to be. Joe's starting." I was quite direct and to my surprise, Woody went along with it. Don't you know, afterwards Woody told me I was right all along, that he just wanted to see how I was going to take care of it, how I was going to handle this thing. After I had spent all this energy and time fighting Woody to get Joe Robinson into the lineup, Woody turned and told me I was right to begin with! I do think Coach Hayes rather liked the way that was handled. We got along pretty well, Woody and I.

Best I Ever Coached—Chris Ward: The best offensive lineman I ever coached was Chris Ward. In all my years—at Nebraska, at Ohio State—he was the best, hands down! He could run. He was strong. He had the desire. Now, Jim Lachey was a great lineman, but I never directly coached Jim. Chris, I coached. I didn't coach Jim Parker, nor Orlando Pace, John Hicks, or Korey Stringer. But I have told you about the two All-American tackles I did coach at Nebraska—Daryl White and Marvin Crenshaw. Then we had Joe Robinson and Bill Roberts at OSU. I coached some good ones, but Chris was faster and stronger than any of them. He had the combinations. When he was between 268 and 272 pounds, he was unbelievable. With all that weight, he could still run a 4.75 forty. When he went over 272 he wasn't as quick, and under 268 he didn't have as much strength. Between those weights though, it was just an amazing combination of strength and speed.

I never coached a player with as much raw strength and speed as Chris had. He was physically overpowering, with very quick feet for his size. Quick feet are essential, because the most important step in blocking is the second step. You make contact on that second step. Chris had that great second step, the most fundamental thing in football for an offensive lineman. That's why Orlando Pace pancaked so many people. That's why John Frank was so good. They were hitting the ground with their second step when the other guy's foot hadn't even started the second step. They were so quick. Bang bang. I would show that film to my guys. That's why I ran my guys in 5-yard wind sprints and 10-yard wind sprints, to develop that first and second step.

Quickness. It's important. There is a difference between quickness and speed. Rod Gerald was one of the quickest guys I ever saw in the 5-yard sprints. When we ran those, most of the time, it was like looking at a blanket, looking at those guys to pick who won the thing in 5-yards. There was usually no daylight in 5-yards, but Rod put daylight between him and the other guys in that 5-yard run. You could see it. I never saw Cornelius Greene, but Archie told me he was even quicker than Rod. Some guys are quick but not fast. I used to say Doug Donley was more quick than fast. Ty Hicks was a Big Ten track champion in the 100-meter. But in the 40-yard sprints, Doug always beat him. In the 60, sometimes Doug would beat Ty, sometimes he wouldn't. But when they would go 100, Ty Hicks would blow by Donley. Donley was quick to the point that it got him a nickname. One time Coach Hayes saw Doug running and Woody asked me, "Who's that? Who is that?"

"Doug Donley."

"Naw," Woody said, "I've never seen a white boy move his feet that fast!" Woody still didn't believe me and so I told him to look at the number. He did, and said, "Well, I'll be, 'White Lightning!'" From then on that was Donley's nickname, "White Lightning."

Quickness. That is one reason Chris Ward was so good. He was lightning, like Donley. He had that second step. Chris would just knock people off the line of scrimmage. Ohio State actually had film of Chris Ward hitting a scout team tackle in practice, and you saw the guy go backwards, and his shoe was left sitting there. Chris had knocked him out of his shoe. When Chris Ward came out, the pro scouts told me that he and John Hannah were the most overpowering linemen to come out of college in the entire decade of the '70s.

I tried to get Coach Hayes to say that Chris Ward was as good as Jim Parker or John Hicks, because I thought that would get Chris the Outland Trophy or the Lombardi Award. Although Coach thought a lot of Chris, I never could get Woody to say that. Coach thought a lot of Chris, but Woody thought so much of those other guys. He was just crazy about Jim Parker. And John Hicks was really tight with Coach, whereas I don't think Chris had that kind of relationship. Coach Hayes respected Chris and Chris respected him, but it wasn't personal for Woody like it was with Parker and Hicks.

Chris Ward was a first rounder, the fourth overall pick in the NFL draft, taken by the New York Jets. He's one of the guys I am most proud of. It's an inspiring story. Chris went through some tough times when he was playing pro football. After seven seasons with the NFL, the guy who was on top of the football world hit rock bottom. As Chris has told the story, his professional career had ended and his marriage had fallen apart. One night after he was finished with the Saints, he was carousing in New Orleans. He has said when he woke up that next morning, there was an evangelist on TV pointing at him. Chris tells of breaking down and saying to the Lord, "I can't run anymore."

Chris eventually ended up in California, out of money and living on the streets. The man who had signed a six-year, $500,000 contract as a rookie in the NFL slept in his car and bathed at a recreation center. Everything he possessed was in his trunk. During this tough time, Chris worked on his ordination and ministered to those more down than even he was. One day Chris was invited to speak at a church and he wowed them with his sermon. A person in the audience gave him a donation. It was the first of many. Chris eventually launched his own church. For seventeen years now, he has been executive director of Ward International, a ministry based in Inglewood, California (*www.wardint.org*). Chris's ministry is an after-school program that targets at-risk youth and teaches them to become viable members of our society. Chris has reached over a million young people, while taking his ministry into gang-infested communities.

The Lord works in strange ways, and Chris is one of them. He was saved not once but twice. Chris's own story is one of being abandoned by his birth parents and left to die in a dumpster. He was first saved by a child service agency and raised by adoptive parents. That night in New Orleans, he was saved again. Today, through that California ministry, Chris is Paying Forward,

saving others with similar childhoods. Woody was proud of Chris Ward when he showed me those rippled muscles back in '77. His old coach would be even prouder of what Chris is doing today as a man of God. If you haven't understood it by now, I will tell you that is something Chris and I share. I have never tried to wear my religion on my sleeve, but rather to quietly make my deep, abiding faith a part of who I am and how I live each day. I will use Chris's own words and story to let you judge if I succeeded at that:

> I have had many football coaches on different levels, and there are three compliments you can give them. Most were great men because they loved to do what they were doing. So the first compliment is, that made them great football coaches. A second compliment is, when you love the people that you are working with. Lastly, the third is when you love to do what is right and to help people. That is the greatest compliment.
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> Bill Myles is worthy of all three. Bill loved to coach, he loved the people he worked with, and he had this innate ability given to him through the word of God. Bill was always able to give wisdom and knowledge and understanding. It is evident in how he raised his children, in his family, and in the players he nurtured. That fathering figure, that spirit of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding operated not only on the football field, but in life outside of football. Bill always had wisdom to give you. That is a rare thing—coaches who love to coach, love young people, and have something else to offer them too, which is the wisdom of God.
>
> Bill was a great coach from a tactician's standpoint. The things he taught me, in only one year, increased my knowledge of the game and helped propel me into a stellar pro career. Bill was more, though, a problem solver and a wise counselor, who set people in the right direction to do the right thing, which in essence saved a lot of kids' lives. Bill's wisdom is sorely needed in today's athletic arena. It is a shame he is not still coaching. Kids today need wise, compassionate direction.
>
> From the time Bill started coaching until now, this generation has become lost out there. Every day you look at the news and see young athletes with guns and drugs and disrespecting women; crazy stuff. We had problems before, but not the widespread moral decay we have now. Bill was able to give wise direction, stern leadership, and had a lot of knowledge about people because he was well traveled, well spoken, and well liked.
>
> I love Bill and his family, with the love of the Lord, and with my whole heart. He has been a great inspiration to me in the ministry I have with young people. We have over fifteen outreach ministries now, and I have anointed almost ten young pastors who are going into ministering. We have reached over a million kids. Bill was a part of that because he helped mold and shape me. He may not know it, but some of the things Bill said to me were things I couldn't get from my natural father because he didn't have that. I thank God for Bill's influence.

I went through some tough times. As Bill has told, I hit bottom and lived on the streets and all of that. A lot of people look at that and say, "Oh, poor Chris." But it prepared me for a prophetic call to the ministry; it gave me a real compassion for people who had less than me. I had been a silver spoon baby. I was an only child. I had two parents and was somewhat spoiled in my upbringing, and with the accolades from the sports field. But the biblical wisdom that Bill Myles was able to impart to me, and the knowing of his life, helped me stay the path that I knew was vital in the depths of my despair. When I went through the tough times, I didn't go through them on drugs or being rebellious. I gave up my house, and I gave up the American Dream lifestyle to pursue God in the middle of the street. God gave me the means to work with these young people who are out here in the streets, and that is where most of them live now. I couldn't see twenty years ago when I did this, see ahead what would happen, see that decay in this society would cause the family structure to break down, and see that these kids would be living on the streets without direction. In the way Bill fathered me, I am fathering them. We have church teams out there working in these high schools helping these kids come to the Lord.

When I was called to ministry at age thirty, after I had gone astray and done some things, I became homeless because I left my house the way Jesus did. The Bible says Jesus left his, and that is similar to what happened to me.

Bill Myles was an influence in all that I have done since. There are dozens of "Little Bills" out there now, paying forward, doing for others what Bill taught and did for them. I am proud to say that because of Bill, I am one of them. Bill has shared with me his saying: *the place you seek is seeking you.* It is true. Bill Myles found his place. So have I.

Worthy of Consideration—Jim Lachey: Another legendary guy I helped coach was Jim Lachey. A gifted athlete, Jim had it all. He could run. He could block. He could tackle. He had desire. Jim had them all. Jim was smart. Jim was a football player.

I have told you about recruiting Jim, and watching him run track because he was so fast. When we had Bill Roberts, Bill was the fastest of the big linemen. I have never seen anybody jump rope faster than Bill Roberts, except maybe a boxer. But when Bill left and Jim Lachey took over, Jim was the fastest lineman. Jim Lachey could play. Even so, Jim only started one or two games his junior year. Then he made All-American his senior year. I had recruited Jim Lachey as a tackle, and he thought he was coming here to play for me, but they moved him to guard. I wanted to keep Jim, but one of the other coaches got together with Earle, and they moved him to guard without me being in on it. That was when I knew I should have learned to play golf, because there were a lot of decisions made on the golf course. Every time I lost someone, and they were giving me another body, Jim would raise his hand to volunteer. I had recruited Jim. Jim wanted to play for me. But I coached tackles and they made Jim a guard.

There was a time when Jim was discouraged because of that, but I talked to Jim and worked on him to stay positive. Jim's roommate, Mike Tomczak, came and got me one night during two-a-days. Jim was discouraged, Mike explained. Jim's words describe that, and how our relationship blossomed, even though I didn't coach Jim directly:

> When I got to Ohio State I was only playing special teams and a backup role my first two years. I just felt I could add more and wanted playing time. At that time, Coach Bruce had three guards rotating, and I don't know that I was a big fan of that. With only two years left, you begin to wonder. You go through all your options. Honestly, I was upset and frustrated that I wasn't getting to play more. I think everybody has that feeling. If you're not on the field, you want to find out why you're not. Now, I wasn't to the point where I had any plane tickets bought, and I had a scholarship to Ohio State I intended to honor. But I did consider things, and Coach Myles was one of the guys I turned to, to help me through that tough time. Let me tell you why.
>
> Football wise, Coach Myles is a teacher. He could instruct you how to get it done. As we know in football, some of the times, things don't go right. Coach was able to help you gather yourself, and go back to battle to get it done the right way. Bill never gave up on anybody. He always said, "Hey, bring them here, I'll coach them up. Give me a chance." Bill saw something in everybody. All the guys who were with him became better football players because they learned from him.
>
> Bill would get on the chalkboard, and he had this great handwriting. It was very neat, precise, cursive writing—something you wouldn't expect from a football coach. He would get up there and everything was worked out. You could envision that there was a time early in his career when Bill probably went and practiced all that stuff, just to make it neat and legible. He just had a way where he taught you and made sense of it. Most of our double team calls were color, so if there was a color involved, you knew somebody was double-teaming. If there was some confusion in the way the head coach or the offensive coordinator explained it, Bill would take it down and say, guards, tackles, boom, boom, boom! You got this, tight end? He made it that simple, and all of a sudden, things would click. He had these teaching things, and I absorbed them, not even being in his meeting room every day. I absorbed them by just watching and being around him.
>
> Off the field, Bill was always there. Six o'clock in the morning, he was the guy waking you up in training camp. Ten at night, he was the guy checking you in. Most of the coaches would come in, do their time, have their little staff meeting, and maybe go home and see their family. You can't blame them. But Coach Myles felt if the guys were going to be in the dorms, if the kids were making that sacrifice, then he would do that same thing. He was committed. He was dedicated. He was a pro. Look at the linemen he put in the NFL.
>
> Bill had all these sayings. "Hit the gate" was one of them. "Between the lines" was another. In Bill's scheme, if you were on the football

field, you were running. So if you heard him say, "Between the lines," and you weren't moving, you understood you better be running. We used to hit the blocking sled. At that time, it was on wheels and had a handle bar and brakes. There was a little tractor seat where the coach sat. Coach Myles was usually sitting on top of that, and there were a lot of times we tried to knock his butt off that tractor seat. We never could, but we tried.

At the training table, Bill would take the time to sit with everyone—one night with the quarterbacks, another night with the receivers, then the D-linemen. If there were meetings or announcements to be made, Coach Myles made them because of that deep, resonant baritone voice.

Even after my career, if there was something I needed some advice on, I knew that Coach would have an idea, or if he didn't, direct me to someone who could help me. Bill has touched countless people just by doing the right thing. He was just a class act. He worked for a lot of coaches who could be good cop-bad cop, and Bill, because of his grace, usually ended up the good cop. He knows there are other ways to skin a cat sometimes, rather than berating people. He knows that sometimes you pick them up; they will respond that way, too. Coach never had a need to swear. He just had better words, I guess. He just didn't need to do that. You always knew that you had his word. If something that you did wasn't working, Coach would take the sword. He would say, "Okay, I didn't teach him right. Head Coach, don't yell at my player. That's my problem; yell at me, because I'm not doing it right."

Keith Ferguson is a good example. No one wanted him. Bill made him an All-Conference player and he ended up playing in the NFL. "Just give him to me, I'll coach him up" was his mantra. "Just give me what you've got, and I'll turn them into football players." He did, because his technique was teachable. Bill was never looking at that next job, or how it would affect him. His mission was to win. Bill loved to win, but enjoy it and win the right way.

Ohio State is lucky to have Bill Myles. He's been around so long and has so much knowledge of that place. It's a great story. It's inspirational. It's the American Dream. More people should know Bill Myles, because he is like the Jackie Robinson of coaches. So what if he didn't make the big dollars. He is a hero to so many athletes because he was there for them. If you take away from *Myles Traveled* Bill's attitude, no matter what you do, you have a chance to be successful.

That night Tomczak came to me, Jim was discouraged, and I did talk with him. "Jim, I can't promise you anything," I said, "but you'd be making a mistake to get down and give up." Well, Jim didn't give up. He not only started his senior year, but he made first-team All-American based on just one year's performance. Then Jim went to the pros as the twelfth guy drafted in the first round of the NFL draft, where ironically they played him at tackle. He made All-Pro in the NFL, he is in our Ohio State Hall of Fame, and no doubt he's

going to be in the Pro Football Hall of Fame one of these days. I think back to the talks I had with Jim, and what might not have been if he had given up when he was down.

One of the knocks on Jim was that some of the coaches said he didn't work hard. According to them, he didn't look like he was even working. "Gosh," I told them, "Jim and Bill Roberts are outrunning everybody! They're faster than anybody we have. They're just gliding along. They're great athletes. It comes so easy. Of course it doesn't look like they're working."

Once again, it goes back to Eddie Robinson. Coaches are always saying he can't do this, he can't do that. I'll say once more, Eddie taught me to ask instead, "What can he do?" Cecil Patterson taught me, "What can he do?" Well, what Jim Lachey could do was block, and block he did. He ended up starting for the Washington Redskins' Super Bowl championship team. And some of our coaches thought he wasn't working. Imagine that.

His senior year, Jim Lachey played guard as good as anybody has ever played it at Ohio State. For a career, you have to think Jim Parker. For an all-time team, you have to go with Jim Parker for what he did over three seasons. But in looking at all those different tapes, for that one year, nobody ever played guard at Ohio State like Jim Lachey. No wonder *Sports Illustrated* once described Jim "Worthy of Consideration" as the best player ever to wear #79 in the NFL. Jim Lachey was that good.

I Wanna Be An All-American—Ken Fritz: "You're either getting better or you're getting worse." Woody always used that and he got it from Jim Parker. I used that too with Kenny Fritz, another tough kid. Ken played guard so I didn't coach him directly. But then, in a way, I did. It happened after Kenny told me he wanted to be an All-American.

We were playing the Illini in Champaign. I guess Kenny's guy was whipping him, because center and guard coach Glen Mason called down from up in the press box. "Get Fritz out of there," Mason said, "he's not playing and that guy's eating him up."

I got Fritz out, and he unloaded on me because I was the guy on the sidelines who had to pull him. "What are you pulling me for?" Ken hollered. "I can't make All-American on the bench. I can't make All-American over here."

"Coach Mason said that guy is eating you up," I told him.

"I'm eating that guy like lunch, Coach, I'm the one chewing him up," Kenny said. "I can't make All-American here on the bench, Coach, get me back in the game." Kenny was something that day I pulled him.

One day at practice I told him, "Kenny, you wanna be an All-American? I'll make you an All-American. You see that Buckeye Grove over there? Whenever we get off the bus to start practice, I'll point at that Buckeye Grove, and you look at it and nod. When we get back on the bus," I went on, "I'll point at the Buckeye Grove again, and you'll either give me a thumbs up or a thumbs down. You either had a good practice, or you didn't."

We followed that ritual day after day, practice after practice. The bus would pull up to the stadium, and I would glance back at Kenny, pointing to the grove with all those Buckeye trees, pointing to those little bronze plaques at the base of each tree trunk. Of course, each one was gold-embossed with

the All-American symbol and a name. Kenny would look over there and nod. After practice, when we would get back on that bus, I'd find Kenny and again nod toward that Buckeye Grove. Most of the time, Kenny would look at me and give me a thumbs up. Of course, it wasn't in his nature to do the other way. But once in a while, when Woody was riding him, Kenny would give me thumbs down. Every day it was on his mind. Thumbs up or thumbs down. Would he get better, or get worse? Every day, Kenny saw those trees and those plaques, and knew at the end of that practice Coach Myles would be looking at him. And you know what? At the end of four years, Kenny Fritz got his name on one of those bronze plaques placed under a newly planted Ohio Buckeye Tree. He was an All-American.

Some might think I am saying I made Ken Fritz an All-American. No! Kenny made himself the All-American. All I did was help him focus on his goal, help him use what Woody had learned from Jim Parker. "If you aren't getting better, you're getting worse."

Sports Leader—Joe Lukens: Joe Lukens is another tough football player and longtime friend. Joe came from Cincinnati Moeller, and his brother Bill had earlier played for Woody. Although Joe never got to play for Woody, Woody recruited him, and I helped. That night still sticks in my memory. I had gone down to Cincinnati to see a big tight end I was recruiting at Western Hills. That same day, Dave Adolf and Woody had driven down to see Joe. They wanted me to go with them to see him that night, but instead I wanted to come back early. You see, the next morning I was flying to Minneapolis to interview for the Minnesota head coaching job. I had that interview on my mind. I hadn't told Woody about that, so they didn't know. Dave Adolf said to me, "Bill, you stay, and when you and Woody get through tonight, you can take Woody back with you. That way, I can stay in Cincinnati and see other recruits tomorrow.

I wanted to tell Dave, "You take Coach back and drive back down here tomorrow," because I needed to pack, needed to get my mind ready, and needed to get some sleep for the interview. Of course, I couldn't do that, so I stayed.

That evening we were sitting in the Lukens' living room with Joe and his parents, when out of the blue Woody asked, "Joe, is there any place we can talk by ourselves?" Joe said they could go down to the basement and so they did, leaving me upstairs with Joe's parents.

Joe later told me, when they got down there Woody said, "Get on your knees."

"Now, I was planning to commit," Joe said, "but I sure wasn't going to kiss his ring or anything like that!" Joe wondered what the heck was going on, and he soon found out. At that time, Woody was into his neck phase, so he tested Joe's neck strength. He was down there pushing Joe's neck forward, backward, up, down, sideways. You would think he went down there to tell Joe all Ohio State had to offer, why he should come, how great a school it was, all of that. Heck no. Woody had Joe down there on his knees, pushing his head around, pushing his forehead down, pushing his ears left and then

right. To hear Joe tell it, you would think Coach was a medical doctor the way he was checking Joe's neck out!

They were down there about a half-hour, and all the while, I was up there talking to Joe's parents, giving them the sell. Finally, Joe told Woody he was committing to Ohio Sate. I am sure he just wanted to get the heck out of there and back upstairs. Wouldn't you? I have heard the phrase twisting his arm, but I have never heard of twisting a neck! When Woody and Joe came back up, Coach Hayes asked Joe, "Don't you want to tell Coach Myles something?"

"Coach, I'm a Buckeye!" That was it. Joe had committed. Now it was getting late, we had a two-hour drive back to Columbus, and I still had to pack and get on a plane early the next morning for the interview in Minnesota. But we had gotten Joe Lukens.

After Joe committed, he came to Columbus a couple of times that summer and we went over the plays. He picked them up just like that! I would tell him what the calls were, what we were looking for. If you see this defense we call this, if he is in a three technique you do that. Boom, boom, boom. Joe was picking it up as fast as I could throw it to him. When Joe showed up at training camp, he did real well. Even before the first game came, it was obvious he was going to start game number one. Then he hurt his ankle. Joe would have started his very first game of his freshman year had he not injured that ankle. The second game Joe was healed and he started. He never came out. That was the first of forty-seven straight games Joe Lukens started for the Buckeyes. He missed only one game in four years and it was that very first one.

Joe was smart. He really wanted to be in on the strategy. I began to tell him, "If you see the tackle here, they are going to switch to this."

Before long, in a game against Indiana, Joe came out one series and told me, "We've got 'em, Coach. I'm calling all automatics up there. We got 'em." One time we called a certain play, but when we got to the line, I was thinking, he's got to go to another. Sure enough, the QB audibled and Joe made the right adjustment. He was really, as they say, "in the zone" that day. Joe came off the field and said, "It's clicking, Coach." And he was just a freshman. Joe had a whale of a first year. I had him at right tackle and he developed into a great tackle. Then Earle and Glen Mason moved him to guard, and Joe became another guy I recruited as a tackle who ended up a guard. Even though the other position coaches had Joe after that, he continued to come around to my office for advice and counsel.

Joe was All-Conference because he was physical. He could pound all day. Joe would give you all that he had for three hours. He understood that you were going to go out there, and for three hours, you were never going to work that hard again in your life. Joe was a tough, tough kid. He was something else. Joe was living proof that you can be a tough, big-time football player and still have class, still be a gentleman, still be a role model in your everyday life. Listen to Joe's reflection on playing for the Buckeyes, and you will agree:

> At the end of the day, people who have the opportunity to play sports are very blessed. To get the opportunity to compete, and especially to play for an unbelievable institution like Ohio State, you are very blessed with all the opportunities that gives you, and all the life

lessons that teaches you about being a good person. You learn through that, all the different virtues, and the coach—in my mind—has such an integral role to help mature young athletes. It's a situation, especially in today's society, where we have many tough situations for kids, where their parents might not be there, or where kids are getting into things that aren't healthy. The coach has a great opportunity to influence that young person to do the right things with their life.

In looking at Coach Myles, he embodied that whole philosophy. He was the kind of guy you took on as a surrogate father when you were away from home, away from your dad. He was the guy to look up to. He was going to teach you more of those lessons that you need to be successful at life. That's what embodied Coach. He was the man who taught you everything—how to play football, of course, but also how to be humble, how to be charitable, how to be gracious, how to be persistent, all those virtues that help you become, in my case, the man I am today.

You can never pay that back. You really can't. The life lessons that you learn from your coaches—and I had a lot of good ones, Coach Myles, Coach Mason, Coach Bruce, and in high school Gerry Faust—the lessons that you learn from men like this, there is no amount of money that can repay them. They have set you up with the virtues that you need to be a successful person. Coach Myles embodied that. He had a great ability to do that. He was a great communicator. He had a great way to relate to his players. His players loved him and wanted to follow his lead.

The coach's opportunity to influence their players for the good has always been there, but it is more magnified today. The reason, of course, is the tragedy we have in humanity with divorce, parents not being there, fathers not being there for their kids. We just need coaches like Coach Myles, and Coach Tressel of course, who is the same type of person, and now Coach Meyer. These guys are teaching young men, a lot of whom don't have a great male influence in their lives, how to be a male, and not society's picture of the male who does nonvirtuous things. Because of Coach Myles, I helped start an organization named "Sports Leader" (www.sportsleader.org) that is all about what Coach Myles represents and tries to help other coaches be more like him.

I've been very blessed to have a wonderful family, a wife of more than twenty-six years now, and five wonderful kids. Bill taught me to be the husband I needed to be, to have the faith life that I have, and then secondarily, with those skills, I do okay in business. In 2002, I decided to Pay Forward for all that and honor Bill by endowing an Ohio State Football Scholarship in his name. When I went to Bill about what I wanted to do, in his modest fashion he resisted. So I told him, "Okay, I just won't do it." Well, that changed things. Now there is within the University's "1888 Society" Endowment Program the Bill Myles Football Scholarship. That will provide a football scholarship

to one player each year in perpetuity. I can think of no more fitting honor for the Coach who helped make me the man I am today.

Joe attacked business the same way he attacked football, with everything he had. He became a very successful businessman. One time Joe wanted to buy a box in the basketball arena. The powers that be said no, that for some reason he had to first do such and such. I said to them, "This guy started forty-seven of forty-eight games for us and he can't get that?" I was a little miffed, because Joe was one of my boys and I am going to protect my boys. In the end, they finally worked it out some way. When Lorita and I celebrated our fiftieth wedding anniversary, Joe came to our party and for our anniversary gave us an exclusive vacation trip. I was humbled to learn how much of an impact Joe Lukens thinks I had on his life. But that is what Joe and I have meant to each other.

The PK—Todd Bell: Todd Bell was an exceptional athlete, but an even better person, and it was such a privilege to know and coach him. It is unfortunate that today's younger Ohio State fans do not know more about his legacy. I originally tried to recruit Todd when I was at Nebraska. I was going into Middletown High School recruiting him and we became good friends, beyond just the usual coach-player bond. Todd was having a hard time deciding, as Woody was also recruiting him. It was Myles versus Hayes. That sounds like a prizefight, doesn't it? Well, we were both boxers, and we did go nose to nose for Todd Bell. Todd finally had to tell me no, that he was going to Ohio State. But Todd and I had become close, and he just couldn't say no. Instead, Todd had his high school coach show up when we were supposed to meet, and his coach told me Todd had decided to go to Ohio State.

Ironically, after the recruiting season was over, I got the Ohio State job. But I don't think Todd knew that. In March, ahead of Todd's freshman year, Woody and I were sitting together at the state track meet. We were at the long jump pit on the west side of Ohio Stadium, and Todd was a long jumper, so he saw me. Todd didn't want me to notice him, after what he had done, so he kept his head down and turned it the other way as he was walking past us. Finally, Coach Hayes called him over. "Hey, Todd! Todd Bell! You hear me, Todd! Come here!" Well, what was Todd to do, ignore Coach Hayes? He came over, but he still wouldn't look up. Then Woody introduced me. "This is Coach Myles. He was at Nebraska, but he's coaching with us now. He's a Buckeye."

Todd looked up and gave me the biggest smile. He later confided that when he first saw me sitting there, he was thinking, "This man doesn't ever give up. He's at our state track meet now, still trying to recruit me."

Todd was a great athlete. He was in *Sports Illustrated* because in high school he had run a 9.7 hundred, he had run a 47-something quarter, a 21-something 220, and had jumped 25 feet—and all of that in one meet! He was something! When Todd came to training camp that fall, Woody had already decided he was going to get Todd in the lineup as soon as possible. I would go up to Todd's room during camp. The freshmen were always rooming on the top floor. (Woody put the starters on the first floor, so they didn't have

to walk up all the steps!) Todd would be up there reading his Bible and doing push-ups and sit-ups every night before he went to bed. Todd didn't have many friends because he was working with the first and second teams, and all his freshmen teammates were with the scout squads. Of course, the varsity guys didn't want any part of him, either, because he was taking the job away from one of their buddies. And Todd wasn't a partier. So I would go up, and it was just the two of us. Todd and I would talk. I knew from recruiting him that he was a very interesting individual, a devout Christian, and we just cemented our friendship.

Todd was a defensive back, which we called our "Rover," and as camp went along Woody would ask how the Rover was coming. The coaches would always say, "We'll have him ready for Oklahoma," which was the third game on the schedule and obviously a huge game.

"No," Woody would tell them, "he's going to be ready when we open with the Miami Hurricanes. He's going to make the mistakes against Miami and Minnesota, so he doesn't make them against Oklahoma!" Todd was ready, and he started that first game in place of a guy who had been a starter the year before. Todd went on to letter four years and become a Pro Bowler with the Chicago Bears.

Todd and I developed our friendship during his four years as a Buckeye, and he continued to come by the office to talk. After a broken leg ended his pro career, Todd came back to campus. I put Todd through the outreach program to finish his degree. Todd wanted so much to graduate in Ohio Stadium that he waited a quarter to do it in the spring, to graduate in the stadium that meant so much to him. Then he got a job at the University, and we continued our weekly soul searching.

Todd Bell was a person who didn't believe that people wore clay shoes. He put everyone on a pedestal. If he just met you, you were on this pedestal at first. But if you messed up, or did something un-Christian-like, that was the end of you and Todd. You were out of there. Todd would think you were not the Christian that he thought you were. He would still be nice to you, would still treat you right, but he didn't really respect you from then on. I tried to tell Todd that everybody has clay shoes, that no one is on a glass pedestal, that everybody has some faults. But I am not sure I was successful in getting through to him. We worked on that. He worked on that, and I think he was beginning to see it, but Todd still struggled with that. Todd had a lot of confidence in me, but shucks, if he had found out some things about me, I might have had the clay shoes, too. Todd had such high expectations for himself that he had those same expectations of others.

The year that the Chicago Bears won the championship Todd sat out on a contract dispute. I saw him in Chicago, when we played Northwestern, and he came over to the hotel. He told me they were still after him, more so than the other two guys who were also sitting out. I told him, "Todd, you're not going to ever get this back. You might as well sign and finish out this year."

"Coach," he explained, "it's a matter of principle." (We had always talked about Principle—Mind, Soul, Spirit, Life, Truth, and Love.) "It's a matter of principle," Todd went on. "They have guys on the bench, handing me a towel to wipe my sweat off, that are making more money than I am. It's not

the money; it's the principle. A guy sitting on the bench shouldn't be making more money. I don't want to be the highest paid, but it's the principle. I know that I'll never get it back. I'll never get this salary back. But it's a matter of principle." That was Todd Bell. You had to admire him. He stood up for the principles he believed in, and he converted some of the guys he played with to become Christians.

Todd had Coach Hayes on this pedestal, too, and I used to think, "I hope he doesn't see some of these other things about Coach." Todd was a defensive player so he didn't see Woody in some of his rages. Coach had a way of dealing with the religious guys—the guys who really were religious and not a show—that showed he respected them. Woody didn't say and do, in front of them, some of the things he did with the other guys. Woody respected them, and their conviction, and so he didn't do in front of Todd some of the things he did otherwise. Woody was that way with Ben Espy. I heard that one time Woody cussed in front of Ben, and then in front of all the other players, he said, "Excuse me for that, Ben." The other players teased Espy about that. Imagine Woody apologizing for swearing on the practice field!

It is interesting. Todd was such a loving, devout Christian guy, but he was one of the hardest hitters I have ever seen in my years of football. He would knock your head off. Now, it was always legal, but he would compete to no end. That was how Todd was.

Todd would go see Woody when he came back to town during his professional days. When he got married, I tried more than once to get him a job on our coaching staff, but they didn't hire Todd. So I gave him my thing on Place—*the place you seek is seeking you.* If it is right, it will happen. It did. He landed in the Minority Affairs Office. It was a perfect fit for him to use his talents to mentor young people, because Todd was such a great role model for them.

Todd was inducted into the Dayton Relays Hall of Fame and asked me to introduce him at the ceremony. In the introduction, I told about his Christian beliefs, about how Todd Bell was a PK—a Preacher's Kid—and how Todd was just a great person. One of the interesting aspects of Todd's life was his marriage to his wife Daphne. When she first met Todd, she couldn't believe he was a football player. When she found out he was a pro football star, she wanted to drop him because of the reputation that pro players have. But she found out this guy wasn't like that, and they eventually married. Todd Bell had everything going for him. Except one thing.

On the morning of March 16, 2005, Todd was driving his car in Reynoldsburg when he died suddenly of a massive heart attack. The man who excelled in professional football, the man who worked out regularly, the man who thought he was in excellent physical condition, died of a heart blockage, suddenly and too young. Tragically, the doctors told Daphne that they could have prevented Todd's death, had they known even that morning of the blockage. But Todd "didn't know his numbers." Today, Daphne carries on Todd's legacy in her "KTOYH—Keeping Tabs on Your Heart" campaign for heart health, in conjunction with the University's Ross Heart Hospital. In Todd's name, she carries the message "Know Your Numbers"—know your cholesterol, know your blood pressure—to Buckeyes everywhere.

Todd's church was packed for the funeral. Ironically, the kids there, the young people that he worked with, just knew him as Mr. Todd. They didn't know that he was a record setter. They didn't know when he was in high school he had broken Jesse Owens's record in the long jump. They didn't know that he started four years with the Buckeyes. They didn't know that he played with the Chicago Bears. They didn't know he had mentored hundreds of young black men in the Office of Minority Affairs. To them, he was just Mr. Todd, just an ordinary guy. That was my friend, Todd Bell. Great! Giving! Gone too soon!

Once So Full of Promise—Art Schlichter: I started this section talking about players that stand out. There is one more Buckeye I should tell you about. Unlike the others, this one stands out for the wrong reason. A sad tale, it still needs telling for the vault of history. Art Schlichter and I were both recruited by Woody Hayes. Art arrived at Ohio State in the fall of 1978, one year after I did, though to much more fanfare and anticipation. Art was going to be the savior of Ohio State football. His arm was going to bring Woody's "three yards and a cloud of dust" offense into the modern era; but Art's career and Art's life would instead prove to be a lesson in human contradiction, a contrast between unmatched physical strength and skills on the field and an equally strong illness and frailty of the human spirit off it.

I was on the sideline on September 16, 1978, the day Art started his first game as a freshman. For weeks, the papers had speculated whether he or Rod Gerald (our quarterback from the previous year) would start. The first game of the season, Woody held them both on the sideline until the rest of the offense took the field. Then Rod Gerald went to wide receiver and Art Schlichter to QB. Ohio Stadium erupted!

Art's life and troubles are well known; but I will tell you one thing about Art Schlichter. When he walked between those white lines, he did the job. On the field, Art was exactly what you wanted in a quarterback. Art was a tough kid who started forty-eight games for the Buckeyes. We had a rule. If you did not practice on Wednesday, you could not start. I saw him out there, with his hands so swollen that he could not take snaps. He had to do it, though, if he wanted to start. They would pop that ball up, and you could see tears rolling down Art's face. He would still do it. Art was that tough. Little did I know then how much Art would later need that toughness to survive what life would deal him.

Art would lay his life on the line for his team. Art was a competitor. Rod Gerald was quick, but Schlichter had the arm, and so Art became our quarterback in his freshman year. I put Art Schlichter up there with the great competitors in sports. You do not go undefeated in every high school sport, and then come here and start as a freshman without being a great competitor. Art was a gifted athlete who always wanted to win. That is one thing he and Coach Hayes had in common. Art was going to do everything possible to win. Taking snaps in practice with his hands so messed up you could see tears come out of his eyes—that was Art doing whatever it took to play.

When he went between the white lines, you wanted him on your side. In 1979, his sophomore year, Art led us to an 11-0 regular season with a win

over Michigan. I have already told how we then lost to USC in the January 1, 1980 Rose Bowl. We were one point from undefeated, one point from being national champions! Fans forget how close Art got us. Of course, what they do remember is the interception he threw in the Gator Bowl the next year, the pick that cost us the game and led to Woody's demise.

I told you about that play, how it was called, and how it was a high-risk play. There is probably one other thing I should say about that incident for the record. Given his later troubles, some fans, to this day, may believe that Art Schlichter intentionally threw that interception. No way! Art was too great a competitor to do that. Art wanted to beat you in everything. I saw him out at the golf course before the pre-game meal, talking about how he could putt so many in from this distance. I saw him in the basketball arena, showing he could make eight out of ten from a certain spot. Schlichter enjoyed showing he could beat you no matter what. I cannot be convinced that Art threw away that game, or any game. I was there, and Art was one of the great competitors. No sir! No one can tell me he threw that ball intentionally. That play was a good play in which bad things could happen, and that night they did.

Art was a good quarterback; but he had an Achilles heel, like Woody. It cost him his career, just like it cost Woody his. Unlike Woody, though, it has also cost Art his freedom, his family, and much of his life. Art's gambling problems are well known. It is a sickness, the doctors tell us. That sickness consumed him. It consumed his family. There was never any indication of his troubles that I saw in the times I was around him. Of course, Art did me in one time later when I was Associate AD, after one of his early releases from prison. I had him all set up to speak to the football team one year, because the younger guys didn't know his story and could learn from it. We had it all set up, had put together a highlight film and everything. He was to speak to the team at practice. The next morning it was in the paper. He was back to his old ways.

At the time I began this manuscript, Art Schlichter was back in Columbus, again working on rehabilitating himself and his life. He had just released a book telling his life story, and he was speaking out against the power of gambling addiction. This is what I wrote at that time in my first draft:

> Some would excommunicate Art from the Buckeye Nation. But I tell you what. Art Schlichter has paid his dues. Ten years in prison. Solitary confinement. A shattered family. A shattered life. Art Schlichter has served his time in the depths of Hell. It's excruciatingly described in his story, *Busted: The Rise and Fall of Art Schlichter,* the book by Jeff Snook. Those who would judge Art should first read his story. They should read Art's story in that book's opening chapter, his vivid description of life in "the hole," in solitary confinement for betting on a basketball game, his account of praying to God that he doesn't bust his twenty-watt light bulb and use it to slice his wrists.
>
> As I read that passage, that account of six months in a dungeon, twenty-three hours a day, I thought back to the toughness that Art Schlichter had shown me on the football field. That toughness I realized had brought him through despair, through a life in prison so

frightening that you and I could never imagine anything like that, and, never imagine going back once we escaped it.

Art has been free and clean now going on four years as I write this. He has started a gambling intervention organization and is a sought after speaker. He is a commentator for WTVN radio. He recorded commercials opposing casino gambling in Ohio. It's said he is continuing his therapy, working on getting his life back, and working to keep others from traveling his road.

The road Art is on is long and the climb steep. It would have broken most of us. But I tell you what. As tough as Art was, if anyone can climb that hill, maybe he can. Maybe he can be the Art Schlichter I saw between those white lines on Saturday afternoons in Ohio Stadium. Let us pray that he makes it, and can use his life to deliver others from the evil illness that consumed too much of his. If Art can do that, it will be a greater accomplishment than any football game he ever won for The Ohio State University.

Of course, now we know that what I wrote is badly out of date. Art didn't make that long, steep climb. He's back in prison. We know now that while I was writing the above, Art was already back to his old ways.

At first, I thought Art just didn't have any will power. But they kept saying it was a disease, and I finally realized it was when I talked with Art one time after he served his first time and was back in Columbus. I asked Art one day if he had ever won when he gambled. He told me about the time that he had won big, and then got caught at a stoplight as he was leaving town. When the light turned green, he turned around, went back, and proceeded to lose it all. I knew right then it was true; it was a disease. I really believe he is sick now. Read that passage of what he went through. Would anyone go back to that if he could control his choices?

What a tragedy for a life once so full of promise. It was a lot of talent wasted. When the latest news broke, the first person I thought of was his mother. I feel so sorry for her. When I see her from time to time, I always speak to her and am kind. I feel so sorry for his ex-wife, for his children, for any he may have wronged or taken advantage of. And yes, I do feel sorry for what the future may hold for the long ago, once-promising life of Arthur Schlichter. It is a wicked illness, and like cancer or heart disease or any other sickness, there but for the Grace of God, go you or I.

YOU WIN WITH PEOPLE

Act IV—Legends in Sports

When I was a little tyke sitting in that two-room Penn School, I had no idea of the people I would be so fortunate to meet later in my lifetime. But when you are high up in athletics at a Nebraska, at an Ohio State, doors open and paths cross with famous people. Whenever that happened, it wasn't that they were important, but rather the opportunity to learn everything I could from those people and that encounter. Take Ali for example. In just a bit, I will tell you about meeting Muhammad Ali and how that happened. To get ahead of myself, though, after I met Ali, later back at Ohio State Larry Romanoff asked me, "Did you get his autograph?"

"No," I said.

Larry was dumbfounded. "You mean you met Ali and didn't get his autograph?"

"No," I told Larry. "Whenever I meet folks like that I always ask them what they think. I don't ask them for autographs. I want something worth much more. I want to get in their head. I want to know what they are thinking."

People don't believe it. They say to me, *"You saw those guys and never got an autograph?"*

"Sure," I tell them, "I wanted to find out what was in their head, not if they could write." I have carried those conversations and the wisdom learned with me ever since, and it has been much more valuable to me than an autograph. What am I going to do with an autograph? Instead, I always wanted to find out, "What did the man think about?" You tell me what the great ones are thinking—now, that is something I can use! Jesse Owens. Ali. Hank Aaron. Bob Gibson. Joe DiMaggio. Jim Brown. Bill Willis. I have had the good fortune, in my life, to be able to "pick their brains" a bit. Let me tell you a little about learning from some of the great ones.

Hi, Champ—Jesse Owens: Jesse Owens and I burst upon the world about the same time! Of course, Jesse was a few months ahead of me in the '36 Summer Olympics, and he arrived with a little more fanfare than when Billy Myles showed up at Wheatley Hospital in Kansas City.

Those summer Olympics were the second splash Jesse made. Jesse, of course, ran the 100, the 220, the relays, in addition to competing in the long jump. The year before I was born, Jesse had set four world records in those events at the Big Ten meet in Ann Arbor. In 2011, on the seventy-fifth anniversary of that achievement, *Sports Illustrated* called that feat "The Greatest 45 Minutes Ever In Sports." In the span of 45 minutes, Jesse tied the world record in the 100-yard dash and set the world record in the long jump, the 220-yard dash, and the 220-yard hurdles. The most amazing thing about that

was Jesse had a bad back that day after injuring it weeks before clowning with his roommates. It has been said that in warm-ups he couldn't even bend over to touch his knees. Many athletes wouldn't have even run. But he and coach Larry Snyder decided to try the first race and see what happened. Jesse himself has said that when he settled in for the first race, the pain "miraculously disappeared." From that point on it was a world record every eleven minutes! It only took him one try to set the long jump record. One try! One try for a world record that lasted twenty-five years. Today, seventy-five years later, that jump is still an Ohio State school record. And he did it with one try! That was an unbelievable feat! There is a plaque on Ferry Field, the track stadium up there on the Michigan campus, commemorating that heroic day. Imagine, a plaque on Michigan Stadium honoring an Ohio State athlete. That's how big that was.

Many people have heard how Jesse got his name and that Jesse wasn't his real name, but few had the privilege of hearing the story from Jesse himself. I did. Jesse told me how he came from Alabama, and his name was James Cleveland. At home, they called him J. C. because his name was James Cleveland, and when he went to school in Cleveland, the teacher asked him his name. He said "J. C. Owens" with that Alabama southern drawl, and of course they thought he said Jesse. So J.C. became Jesse.

Everyone talked about the three J's when I was a youngster. Joe Louis, Jackie Robinson, and Jesse Owens. They were the guys, the big deal in the black neighborhood. I had the privilege of seeing Jesse race a horse in Blues Stadium. Of course, he raced the horse for the money. It was a shame what he had to do to support his family, given what he had done for his country in the Olympics! They would line Jesse and the horse up on the third base line and run them out into right field where they had the finish line. The horse had a jockey, and they would start the race with a starter's pistol just like a regular race. The starter gave the set command, like he would at a track meet. When he said, "Go," and shot the gun, Jesse took off. Well, the horse couldn't start as quick as Jesse could. The horse was gaining on him, and when they got to that 100-yard mark, Jesse was just ahead of him. That's how that race went. The first time Jesse beat the horse, but the second year Jesse slipped on the start and the horse beat him. Not many people at thirty-five years old can outrun a horse! But since the horse can't start as fast as a man, a horse can't win the first one hundred yards, and at a longer distance the man can't beat the horse. So who was going to win was determined by how long they made the race.

Later, when I got to Ohio State, Jesse would be around sometimes, so I got to meet him and talk with him. We came to know each other and he would stop by my office and tell me about his experiences. Jesse gave me a picture to hang in my office. It shows him running at Ohio State, and he inscribed it to me. Butch Reynolds, Chris Spielman, those guys used to come in and admire that picture of Jesse. They all wanted to get their picture on my wall, so I told them you have to win an individual thing, something only one person has done. Jesse won those gold medals, set those world records, those Olympic records. When Butch Reynolds won the Olympic 400 meter, he gave me a picture that I put it up in my office. Chris Spielman was always in there

looking and looking, and finally, when he won the Lombardi Award, one day he walked into my office with his picture and snarled, "Now that goes on your wall!"

I noticed that Jesse called everybody Champ. Hi, Champ. One day, I asked him, "Jesse, why do you call everybody champ?"

"When you call them Champ, you don't have to remember all their names," Jesse told me. "That guy feels good." Jesse met a lot of people. He may not have known the guy from Adam, but the guy never knew Jesse didn't know his name and he felt good. That was Jesse.

Jesse Owens was another guy who was so competitive. I used to tease him. One time I told him, "This guy I know told me he beat you."

Jesse got right up on the edge of his seat and told me, "That boy never beat me." He was so competitive that way. "I beat him in cards," he told me. "I beat him doing this. I beat him doing that. That guy couldn't beat me," he said. "Well, maybe in a preliminary, when I was just coasting."

The thing about Jesse is that he is known all over the world. Lorita and I were in Berlin. They talked about Jesse Owens. They don't talk about our Heisman winners over there. But they talk about Jesse!

Jesse was a great man who was ahead of his time. He stood up for a lot of things. Some people in the black community thought he wasn't aggressive enough as far as civil rights were concerned, but I put things in the context of their time. I listen to people talk about Booker T. Washington and those guys. Some of our young black leaders today say those guys didn't do anything. Shucks, if Booker T. Washington or Jesse Owens had done some of the things that the militant groups did later, we would have never heard of them. They would have been wiped out. Silenced. They would have been strung up somewhere. People like Jesse and Booker T. have a place in our history. That time and that era have passed, but they laid the groundwork for all the things that have come since.

That is why I was proud to be part of the Jesse Owens Stadium and to see that Ohio Historical Society Marker put up at the Southwest corner. Andy Geiger and I were there the day that marker was erected to commemorate Jesse's accomplishments. Every day when I went to work, to my last office over in the Jesse, I got to walk by that plaque. I think that marker symbolizes *class*, because when I think of Jesse Owens, I think of a guy with a lot of *class*. Of course, now it is more than just a marker, since they have erected his statue there and landscaped the memorial.

Jesse was always upbeat. "Hi, Champ, how ya doing?" He wanted to know what you were doing. I don't know what he took to his grave, what he thought deep down, but even though Jesse didn't enjoy the spoils of his achievements like other athletes did, even though he had to race horses to support his family in his younger days, Jesse was still always upbeat, always positive. You have to remember, Jesse was born in Alabama in the early part of the century. He probably saw some lynchings in his day, so he was taking it one step at a time.

It all depends what era you live in. I tell these young bloods, "If you had done some of the things back then that you do on these campuses now, you'd been strung up like Emmett Till." Emmett Till, of course, was the

fourteen-year-old boy who was beaten, shot, and drowned in the Tallahatchie River for allegedly whistling at a white woman in Mooney, Mississippi. His mother had his casket open so people could see just how badly he was mutilated. The two men who murdered him were acquitted, and then were paid $4,000 by *Look Magazine* to confess and tell how they did it. And that happened in 1955. When the murderers were acquitted, that incident became one of the roots of the Civil Rights Movement. That was just shy of twenty years after Jesse ran in the Berlin Olympics. So when we talk about Jesse today, we have to remember the times he lived in. Some of the athletes who were brave back then are forgotten. They did not survive. So I will never agree with anyone today who criticizes Jesse Owens.

Jesse was very humble. It was another thing about that era. At that time, we hadn't yet had a Muhammad Ali. Joe Louis was humble. Jackie Robinson was. Ben Hogan was. Nicklaus was. Jim Brown didn't brag about the stuff he did. The great athletes of that era were humble. But then along came Ali, and he changed all of that.

People have asked me if it was a hard decision to take that track out of Ohio Stadium, to remove that hallowed ground on which Jesse ran. "Yes and no," I answer. I thought it was a decision that was hard, but that might be the reason we have the beautiful Jesse Owens stadium. Yes, Jesse is Ohio State's most famous athlete. We have the Jesse Owens Stadium where his statue now is. There are three Jesse Owens gymnasiums. And there is the Jesse Owens monument to him in front of Ohio Stadium. So Jesse has not gone unrecognized.

When they put the monument up in front of the Rotunda, I stood in my office in St. John Arena and watched them construct it. I kept waiting for them to put Jesse up. I thought they were going to put up a guy running or something like that. I was waiting for a statue. I stood there and watched, waiting for them to put him up. "I don't understand this," I thought at the time. So I went over and asked the designer from Atlanta about it.

The designer pointed to the four sections, the four triangles pointing to the sky. "That stands for his four world records," he said. "That arc that comes up and never touches symbolizes that he was never completely accepted." That person is the only person who ever explained to me what it all meant. I bet a lot of people don't know those things to this day. It has become, though, a recognizable campus landmark, most fittingly and proper in front of the stadium where he ran. And now there is his actual statue outside the track stadium that bears his name. The two represent a fitting marriage of the past and the future.

Of course, I think the Big Ten Network got it terribly wrong when they placed Jesse at number three in the Big Ten Icons series. It is not hard to figure out, though. As I understand it, the Big Ten put a bunch of twenty- and thirty-something TV producers in a room and instructed them to come up with a list. Well, there wasn't any Sports Center when Jesse ran, no highlights clips, and of course, Jesse died before some of those people were even born. Still, it says something about our sense of history, or lack of it, that we are passing to the next generation. The great Jesse Owens—number three? Really?

Jesse Owens is and may forever be Ohio State's greatest athlete. I think he is the Big Ten's greatest, too. Of course, nobody asked Bill Myles!

Ali: I met Muhammad Ali on a couple of occasions. The first time was back in Kansas City. It must have been around 1963. I was coaching high school ball, and Ali was young. He was still Cassius Clay then, so it would have been before he changed his name in 1964. I lived between Prospect and Montgall, and Ali was hanging out on the corner of 31st and Prospect. That corner, about two blocks from where I lived, was becoming a prominent corner and Ali was entertaining the assembled crowd. Ali asked the crowd, "Who's the baddest dude in town?" The crowd pushed a contender out there, and he and Ali began shadow boxing. The contender would throw punches and Ali would bob and weave. Then the contender threw a punch at him. Ali ducked and kicked him in the rear, and said, "I'm the baddest dude in town!" Everyone laughed. He just had the crowd in the palm of his hand that day.

The next time I saw Ali was in Las Vegas in 1987, soon after I became Associate AD at Ohio State. I went to Vegas to see the fight between Sugar Ray Leonard and Marvin Hagler. Ali was retired and in town, too. He was in the hotel I was staying at, and that morning he was at breakfast, alone at a table across from where I was. We both were eating, and we both were alone, so I asked if I could move over and eat with him. "Sure," he said. So I did. It was just the two of us, and he wanted to show me one of his many magic tricks. Ali took out a handkerchief and he showed both sides to me. Of course, there was nothing on it, and then he stuffed it down his sleeve. When he pulled it out, presto! There was a ball inside of it. I laughed, of course. He did it several times and I never could figure where the ball was coming from! I asked Ali several things as we ate that morning, but I didn't ask him for an autograph.

As I told you, when I got back at Ohio State, Larry Romanoff asked me, "You mean you saw Ali and you didn't get his autograph?" Larry couldn't believe it. What I got from Ali that morning, what I asked him for, was something much more valuable than an autograph. "What are you thinking about in a fight?" I asked Ali that morning. "What are you doing before a fight?"

"You know," Ali told me. "My whole idea against Sonny Liston was that people are scared of a crazy man. I acted as crazy as I could. Liston was scared of me. Instead of Liston being the intimidator, I intimidated him."

That is true, you know. That happened. It is in the history books. Liston finally admitted about Ali, "That sucker's crazy."

Ali kept talking. He said he told Archie Moore, "Archie, you'll go in four." Ali continued, "In that fight, Archie Moore came out and said to me, 'It's the fourth round, what you gonna do?' Of course, I knocked him out in the fourth." (Now, Archie Moore was old enough to be Ali's daddy.) Ali said he just played on those guys' minds because *"everybody's scared of a crazy man."* He would just act as crazy as he could. Everybody was scared of Liston, but Ali made Liston scared of Ali.

Ali talked that morning about the different sciences of boxing, about what he was doing. "I move around to see if the guy can move," he said. "I do this, I do that, see how they react." As he told me all about his strategy, it dawned on me how Ali had earned the nickname the "Louisville Lip."

The thing I liked about Ali was that he, too, knew how to compete. He was another competitor. By now you should understand; there is nothing I like better. A competitor! Ali had also figured out what my father told me a long time ago. "If you make a guy angry, he can't think." And those guys were so angry before they got into the ring against him, they couldn't think! He was talking to them all, calling them all kinds of names—Liston, Floyd Patterson, Archie Moore, Joe Frazier. It was all a ruse to make them angry, to make them think he was crazy. It worked!

If you make them angry, they can't think. Of course, you can turn that around on yourself, too. If someone makes you angry, you can't think. That was one of my father's quotes. "Don't let a guy make you angry, because he's got control of you." Ali made them angry, and he got control of them.

Playing With the Black—Bob Gibson and Henry Aaron: When I was coaching at Nebraska, there were not too many places of entertainment for blacks in Lincoln, so we would go to Omaha for parties. Bob Gibson would sometimes be there. I always liked Bob because he was such a competitor. He could really stick that ball right up under your chin. I had watched him play basketball at Creighton University while I was at Drake, and you could see that competitiveness when Bob played there, and then with what he did in Major League Baseball. I would sit and talk with Bob, because competitors just fascinate me.

I have said I would ask guys questions because I wanted to get what was in their heads. When I talked with Bob, I asked him about guys like Hank Aaron. I asked him what it was like to pitch to the guy nicknamed "Hammer," a guy named an All-Star every year for twenty-five years, a man *The Sporting News* once named the fifth greatest player in the game. I asked Bob, "What made Hank Aaron so tough?"

Bob would tell me that sometimes he would let one go and he would say to himself, "If I could just get that one back." Bob then said, "Some guys will foul that one off; you can get away with one with some guys. But it never happens with Hank Aaron. He doesn't foul those off. You slip up once, you don't get it back. It's gone." Bob went on to tell me, "You're only going to see that pitch once every week and a half. The guy is only going to slip up every so often."

I started watching for that. I would see Reggie Jackson during the end of his career foul a pitch off, and just take his bat and grind the end of it into the ground. "He missed his pitch," I would tell myself.

I asked Bob, "Did you have any strategy with Aaron?"

"Yeah," he said, "I tried to go into his kitchen uninvited."

"What's his kitchen?" I asked.

"That's the area between his fists and his chin," Bob told me. Bob went on to say that he did that one time and Aaron handcuffed his third baseman with a rocket shot. "He handcuffed him," Bob said.

Later, I ran into Hank Aaron at the Browns' training camp in Berea. Hank and I were talking, so I turned the tables and asked him about Gibson. "What about these pitchers?" I said. "What do you think about batting against Gibson?"

Hank told me he didn't like to play against Gibson. He didn't like to play against Koufax. He didn't like to play against those guys. "They just play with the black," Aaron told me. Of course, he was talking about the edges of the plate, that one-inch strip of black on the perimeter. "I like to play with the others, though, 'cause they are coming right down over the white," Hank went on, licking his lips as if to say, I've got this turkey. "But Koufax and Gibson, they just play with the black."

First Gibson told me how much respect he had for Hank Aaron, and then Aaron told me how much respect he had for Bob Gibson. They truly admired each other. I got that because I asked what was in their heads instead of asking for an autograph.

Perfect Pitch—Joe DiMaggio: Joe DiMaggio was another great player, and I was always intrigued by great people. What made them great? What did they do to become great? How did they look at the game? How did they prepare themselves? I always wanted to know.

On August 27, 1986, the OSU football team opened play against Alabama in the Kickoff Classic in East Rutherford, New Jersey. It was a nail biter. Alabama scored ten unanswered points in the fourth quarter and hung on to win 10-6, when a pass to Cris Carter fell incomplete in the end zone on the final play of the game. While we were there, Archie and I were lucky enough to get to Yankee Stadium and sit in owner George Steinbrenner's box. We spent quite a while talking with Steinbrenner in his office before the game. I remember he had a big glove for a chair in there, just like the Seinfeld episodes! Steinbrenner liked Ohio State. He was an OSU guy. George met his wife in Columbus while he was here working on his master's in physical education. His wife funded our fantastic band room when they did the Stadium remodeling. And Hop Cassidy worked for Steinbrenner. George liked football. Many don't know it, but Steinbrenner was a graduate assistant under Woody in 1954 when they were national champions, and then went on to be an assistant coach at both Northwestern and Purdue. So George liked Ohio State, and even though he is known for baseball, he liked football.

After we visited in George's office that night, we went up to his private box. Arch and I were sitting there in his owner's box, when who walked in but Joe DiMaggio. Joe DiMaggio! The guy who broke into the majors in '36, the year Billy Myles was born! Joe DiMaggio, the guy who won nine World Series Championships. Joe DiMaggio, the guy who to this day holds the MLB record of fifty-six consecutive games with a base hit! Joe DiMaggio, the only guy ever selected for the Major League All-Star game in every season that he played! That Joe DiMaggio walked in and sat down between Arch and me.

Now, 1986 would have been thirteen years before Joe passed, so he must have been about seventy-two at that time. There I was, little ole Billy Myles from Lincoln High, sitting with the guy who's a baseball legend, sitting with a two-time Heisman Trophy winner, sitting there in the owner's box of the New York Yankees. What a place, I thought. As I like to say, "If only the boys on 43rd and Broadway could see me now."

I happened to mention to Joe that I saw him play in Chicago in the early '50s, when I was only fifteen or sixteen. Still, I remembered watching him do

something that I had never seen anyone else do. I told Joe, "When the ball was hit, you just turned and ran. You never looked back at the ball. You just ran to the spot, stopped, turned around, and caught the ball." After all these years, I still remembered being awestruck at what DiMaggio did that day.

Joe not only explained to me how he was able to do that; he demonstrated it. As we were sitting there with Joe between us, with Archie on the right of him and me on the left, when the ball was hit, Joe would say, "That's into right field for a double." The ball wasn't even out of the infield yet, and he was calling it. Sure enough, it was a right field double. Then he would say, "That one's against the wall out there in right field," and we would see the Oakland A's Rupert Jones turn his back and run. Rupert would run and look and run and look, and finally, when he would get to the base of the wall, he would catch the ball. Watching him turn and look and turn and look, I could recall how DiMaggio had made the game appear so easy that day back in Chicago when he just turned and ran to the spot without ever looking back.

Joe would say, "That one's at the base of the wall. That one's in for a double. That one's in for a single." What was unbelievable, though, was that he would say that with the ball right off the bat. And he never missed! It was then I realized that he had the equivalent of what my brother John had in music. Joe DiMaggio had "perfect pitch." When Joe heard the crack of the bat, he knew where the ball was going, and he knew it by the sound. Joe told us where it was going long before it was there. I had never before seen anyone else do this, except when I saw Joe that day long ago in Chicago; but I saw it again that night, because Joe DiMaggio put on a real show for Archie and me.

It was just such a thrill to meet him. People ask me what it was like. He walked in looking well dressed, dapper and in a suit. But I must confess, I thought he was going to be bigger. As a youngster, you build these guys up to be so big and I thought Joe would be 6'2" and 200 pounds, but I was surprised. He looked to me only about 5'10". He didn't say a lot until I told him what I had seen him do as a youngster in Chicago, and then he really warmed up to Archie and me. I remember that night like yesterday.

Where's It Coming From?—Jim Brown: Jim Brown was another one that I talked to and learned from. Jim would tell me that when he carried the ball, his thing always was, "What is the next guy going to do?" Jim was always thinking, asking himself what was going to happen after this block, where would his next trouble come from? Jim told me that he was looking at the situation right in front of him, but after he saw what was happening, he was already thinking, "Where would the next trouble be coming from?" Would it be coming from the corner over here on his right, or maybe that linebacker on his left? Like all the great ones, Jim was way ahead of the game, with that rare ability to concentrate simultaneously on what was going on and what was about to happen.

Jim Brown could do this because he knew all the blocking. OSU's great tackle Dick Schafrath, who played for the Browns, told me how they would have a meeting with Jim in his room the night before games, to go over the blocking assignments. Jim wanted to know the assignments, and know where

the next trouble was coming from. "If I see this is taken care of, where do I look next?" Jim asked his linemen in those meetings.

The great ones are all like that. Can you imagine what it is like to play with a LeBron James? You or I couldn't play with a LeBron, because he is looking two or three passes ahead of you. And then he is mad at you because you didn't pass it to the one you should have passed it to. He is thinking, "That guy is automatically going to come open because I'm coming down the floor, and I see how these guys are leaning. I know where they are going." The average Joe wouldn't want to play with those guys—with James, with Barkley, with Jordan—because they are going to be angry at you all the time, because they can see two and three passes ahead of the rest of us.

Friend, Mentor, Buckeye—Bill Willis: I have met a lot of great ones, but I saved the best for last. None taught me more than Ohio State's own Bill Willis! He was the Jackie Robinson before Jackie Robinson. I first heard of Bill back in Kansas City when I was but nine or ten years old, and I really liked this guy that they talked about. I never got to see him play college ball, but I watched him on TV as a Cleveland Brown. And later when I came to Ohio State, I was fortunate to know him personally as a friend. When I think about Bill Willis, I think of the class and dignity of the man. With that deep baritone voice, he enunciated very well and talked slowly with great modesty and sincerity. Bill was *class* personified.

Bill Willis ended up at Ohio State in 1941 through the graces of Paul Brown. Francis Schmidt had played no blacks during his previous seven years as Ohio State head coach. Bill was considering going to Illinois, but new coach Paul Brown gave him an opportunity. The opportunity to become a Buckeye forever changed Bill's life and forever changed Ohio State football. Bill was a big part of the team that put Ohio State football on the map, the middle anchor of that 1942 national championship team. Bill might well have been at Illinois if it hadn't been for Paul Brown. Imagine how that would have changed Ohio State football!

The Bill I came to know later in life made movements that were slow and graceful. But I read about this guy who as a young man was one of the fastest ever to play in the line. Bill once told me why he was a tackle when he had the kind of speed he did. Bill's older brother Claude had played at a black college in South Carolina. They called Claude "Big Deek" and Bill "Little Deek." Bill's brother had been a great player and Bill told me that when he went to Columbus East High School, he didn't want to be compared to Claude. Claude had been a great running back, so Bill went out for the line. Otherwise, no coach would have ever played at tackle a guy who eventually would place second in the Big Ten in the 60-yard dash! That is why we had a lineman who ran down Claude "Buddy" Young up in Cleveland Stadium.

"Buddy" Young. It is a legendary story. Illinois had been experiencing poor attendance during the war, so the '42 game—which was a home game for Illinois—was moved to Cleveland Stadium to draw a crowd. In 1943, the game was played in the Horseshoe, but in 1944 it was again moved to Cleveland Stadium. Illinois came to Cleveland featuring freshman running sensation Claude "Buddy" Young, who that year would both tie Red Grange's

touchdown record and win All-American honors. The first black to play for Illinois in forty years, Buddy was nicknamed "the Bronze Bullet" because he ran a 9.4 100-yard dash, unheard of in those days. Buddy won the National Collegiate Championships in the 100- and 220-yard dashes and tied the world record for the 45- and 60-yard dashes. Bill Stern, a sportscaster at that time, called him, "the fastest thing in cleats." That was Buddy Young.

On November 18, 1944, a record crowd of 83,627 people packed Cleveland Stadium to see Illinois and Buddy Young take on the Buckeyes. In one of the talked about plays in Ohio State history, Bill Willis—a tackle mind you—caught Buddy Young from behind on a long run and saved a touchdown in a 26-12 Buckeye win.

That wasn't the only time Bill did that. Mike Brown, Paul's son, told a similar story at Bill's memorial service. As Mike eulogized, he told the story of the lowly regarded Cleveland Browns playing the New York Giants in 1950, in that very same Cleveland Stadium. This time it was for the division championship and the right to go to the "Super Bowl" of the day. The Giants were leading 3-0 late in the game, and they had a star back named "Choo Choo" Robinson who broke free around the end and was running untouched down the sideline for a touchdown that would put the game out of reach. That is, as Mike told it, until a middle lineman emerged from the pack and gave chase from behind. That lineman would not be denied. He ran "Choo Choo" down at the 4-yard line for the touchdown-saving tackle. The Browns held the Giants to a field goal, marched down the field on the next possession, and scored to win the game. The next week the Browns won the NFL championship and it was the start of a dynasty. All because that lineman outran "Choo Choo" Robinson. Of course, Mike then revealed, that lineman in his story was Bill Willis.

Bill had dignity and he was smart. He was an educated man very devoted to his family. Bill reminded me of my father, because Bill had three boys, and he sometimes said that I was like a son to him. It is among the nicest things anyone has ever said to me. A relationship like that was something I had never had with an older gentleman, because all my uncles were dead when I got to that age. I never had an uncle as an adult, and Bill was the closest older, wiser person I ever knew. He advised me on things, told me things to be aggressive on and things I shouldn't. And he was very humble about it. He never told me he had a school named after him. I found that out when I went to visit that school. I admired Bill tremendously for the kind of man he was, for the athlete that he had been, and for the things he had lived through with class and dignity.

I arrived at Ohio State in 1977 just as Bill was being inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. During a meeting with the Buckeye coaches, I asked Woody, "Coach, what are we going to do for Bill Willis? He's one of ours, and he's going into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Is Ohio State going to do anything for him?"

"You got any suggestions?" Woody asked.

"Well, Coach, we need to bring him over and do something for him."

"You get Bill on the phone," Woody told me. "See when he is available. We're going to have a luncheon for him over at the faculty club." Bill made

himself available, and our staff had lunch with Bill. Bill was so engaging that we talked for two hours that day about all he had done, and how he had done it with so much class.

In 1985, Bill and his wife Odessa came over to my house one day. He said he wanted to talk, and Bill and I went out on our porch. He made some small talk, and eventually got to what he had come for. Bill invited me to join the Columbus Chapter of the Boulé. I didn't even know what the Boulé was. Lorita and Odessa were inside, and Bill and I sat in the sunroom and talked. Eventually we went inside, and after Bill and Odessa had left, Lorita asked, "You're going to do this, aren't you?'

"I have to think about it," I answered.

"Think about it? What do you mean think about it? There's nothing to think about," she glared at me. "You are going to do this."

I didn't know as much about this organization as Lorita did. The Boulé, meaning "Council of Noblemen," is Sigma Pi Phi, the first black Greek-letter organization, dating back to 1904. I didn't know this organization was so prestigious, or that an invitation to join was such an honor, or how few are invited. So I joined. I am one of the few people in athletics in the Columbus Chapter. There is Archie and me. The other members are mostly very successful black businessmen, doctors, lawyers, judges, and politicians. We mentor, network, travel, and do charitable work in the black community.

In 1998, I had a little bout with something the week after the Michigan Game. I'll tell you about it later, but Bill would come up to the hospital at ten or eleven o'clock at night and just sit in the room with me. I didn't even know he was there, but Bill was there for me. Later, I was able to reciprocate when he had a stroke. One day when I was in my office at St. John, Odessa called me on the phone. She was at the OSU Hospital behind East High School, and wanted me to come. "I'll be there in a half-hour," I told her.

As I said, Bill was the Jackie Robinson before Jackie. Bill broke the color barrier of pro football in 1946, the year before Branch Rickey brought Jackie into Major League Baseball. Rickey was reportedly talking to Paul Brown all during the winter of '46 and the spring of '47. The story goes that Branch Rickey had watched Bill Willis and Marion Motley—watched how they carried themselves, how they restrained themselves in the rough contact sport of football, in the face of being tested and taunted. That convinced him that Jackie could do the same in baseball.

Bill told about breaking that barrier, and how he came to training camp a couple of days late when he first tried out for the Browns in Bowling Green, Ohio. I have heard the story two ways. I heard that Bill wrote Paul, or drove to Cleveland to see him, and Paul said he would get back to him, but never did. So Bill just showed up at camp. Jarrett Bell quoted Bill saying that, in a story he wrote in *USA Today*. But I have also heard that Paul wrote Bill and asked him to come. I don't know which is correct. I never asked him about that, although I now wish I had. That is something history should have straight.

I do know there was at least one letter involved. At Bill's service, Mike Brown told of going through his father's papers and finding a letter Bill had written Paul Brown in April of 1945, when Bill was about to graduate from Ohio State. Bill thanked Paul in the letter for all that he had done for him.

Mike said the letter was notable for what it said, but even more notable for what wasn't in it, notable there was no mention of asking for a chance to play on his father's new professional team. Mike explained that in 1945, the country was largely segregated, and of course pro football had been segregated from the beginning. Mike said he thought Bill's first letter planted that seed with his father. He went on to tell that a year and a half later, Paul Brown did call Bill and asked him to come and watch practice. Mike then said that when Bill got there, he asked Paul for a tryout. The rest is history. That seems like the most plausible explanation to me of how it transpired, and I heard with my own ears Mike Brown tell that story in his tribute at Bill's service. All reports do say that Paul Brown told Bill to come a couple of days later, when the press wasn't there. Bill himself told me that part was true.

Bill told me how players used to step on his hands in the league games, and how the other Browns would take up for him and watch his back. He told more than once the story of how he and Marion Motley missed a game in Miami in 1946. He later learned Paul Brown had kept them home because of death threats. Bill has been quoted as saying that Paul told him, "I don't want you to be subjected to any kind of foolishness. Next year, they won't be in the league." It's my understanding that the next year Miami wasn't in the league. That was the influence of Paul Brown. Paul Brown loved Bill Willis and Bill Willis loved Paul Brown. I would go with Archie Griffin to see the Bengals games in Cincinnati, and Paul Brown would have Bill Willis sitting there in his owner's box.

Bill didn't like to talk publicly about some of the things he endured. There were racial taunts. Cheap shots! Segregated housing on road trips! You could tell that a lot of those things really hurt him. Bill was firm in his beliefs, though, and one thing he was proud of was that he never lost his cool. He was always above everything that ever happened to him. That is why I say he was class personified.

Bill was some kind of man, not only in football but also in life. After his professional career, Bill served as director of the Ohio Youth Commission. Governor Rhodes had a great amount of respect for Bill and put him in that job. Naturally, Bill made it a bigger job than it was envisioned. Bill did a lot of community work and was a man devoted to his friends and to a cause. If you talk to people in the social work community, they will tell you of the admiration they have for Bill Willis.

For all he had done in football, Bill never wanted to talk much about breaking that barrier, though, or the things he had to endure. You had to work to bring that out. I would ask him at times about things, but Bill talked about the now and the future, not about what had happened to him in the past. "How can we get these kids to understand about education?" Bill would ask me. "How can we get these young men to be more respectful of women?" Those types of things were big on the agenda of Bill Willis, and these things are hard to do when young people don't have good examples set for them. And you know, it is happening to all races now, not just the blacks. It's a poverty issue now, not just a race issue. And it's second and third generations. Families, values, education, opportunity. That was the real focus of Bill Willis and his life's work.

Bill was quite funny and you should have heard him tell jokes. He talked so slowly! I used to kid him and say, "Bill, if I were ever going to the electric chair I would want you to pronounce my sentence."

Every time I told him that, he would give me the opening, "Why?" Even though he knew the story, he would give me that opening. It was our ritual. "Why?" he would ask.

"Because I probably would die a natural death before you ever got the sentence out!" I would tease him. Then I would mimic him:

"I sentence Bill Myles to die in the elec tric chair."

And then he would laugh. Every time. Bill had that base voice and talked very deliberately, which made him such a good public speaker. I had the opportunity to introduce him several times, once during Black History Week when they had a night for him, another time to the Ohio High School Football Coaches at one of Coach Tressel's clinics. Whenever I introduced Bill, I talked about all his successes, not only those in athletics.

The time I enjoyed most was when Coach Tressel asked me to introduce Bill to his team, to players who didn't know about all his accomplishments. I picked Bill up that night, and we had dinner with the team. Then he spoke to them in the Fawcett Center. Those players developed a great respect for him. Of course, Bill's time was long before they were born. They didn't know his story; they didn't know all he had been through. It was during fall camp, and when Bill spoke in that deep, melodic, dignified voice, with that slow cadence of his, the guys hung on every word. He talked to them about being prepared. He told them, "When you get a chance, you have to take it and run with it." He talked about being mentally tough. Bill didn't talk about anything that he did. I had mentioned all those things, and Bill didn't blow his own horn. Instead, he talked about school, about getting their grades. "You're one play away from being through with football. Take advantage of all this," he advised them. "Things will never be like they are for you now." He didn't talk long, but he didn't have to. He could pack a lot into a few words. Afterwards, all those guys were running up to him, wanting to talk, to shake his hand and to pat him on the back.

Every time I introduced Bill, I explained that here was a guy who had to thumb a ride every day from the East Side of Columbus to get to Ohio State, because he couldn't stay in the dorms when he was a student. He wasn't allowed to stay in the dorms of his own school because he was black! He thumbed a ride to campus all the time, but you never would know that. Bill told me about the times when he would go see L. W. St. John, the athletic director, to sign each week for his game tickets so his parents could come see him play. St. John would ask him, "Now, Bill, who are you going to have come to the game to see you play? You don't need these tickets. What are you going to do with these tickets?" He didn't know whether St John was pulling his leg or not. Bill said he had to go through this every week with his own athletic director to get his tickets for his parents.

Bill said all of this to me in his deliberate voice but never in anger. It was just part of his past and part of the black past. He told me how he competed

for Ohio State in the Penn Relays one spring—he lettered twice in track and got second in the Big Ten in the 60-yard dash—but couldn't stay in the team hotel. The second fastest man in the Big Ten couldn't stay with his own team because of segregation. Since he was staying in the black neighborhood, the cab was late getting him to the train station. Bill missed the train for the return trip to Columbus. Bill told me how the track people didn't get him back and how he called Paul Brown. Paul wired him money so that Bill and the other black athlete could get back to Columbus. Paul Brown recounted that incident in his autobiography, *PB: The Paul Brown Story*:

> As a result, they got separated from their teammates after the meet and suddenly found themselves alone and virtually without money in a strange city, 600 miles from home," Paul wrote. "Bill called me and I wired money so they could pay for their room and get home. You can be sure I let Ohio State's track coach know I didn't appreciate any of our players being abandoned like that.

Bill loved music. I would go to his house and he had an entire room filled with shelves of music. He was really into computers and mixers, and the technology of music. Jazz. Ballads. Blues. He had everything. This room was fantastic. I would ask Bill, "How about a little Miles Davis?" He would push a few buttons, and we would be listening to Miles Davis. "Give me a little Lena Horne," I would say. A few more buttons and Miles would give way to Lena singing "Stormy Weather."

"You got Billie Holiday?" On would come "Good Morning Heartache."

"B. B. King?" Soon we were listening to "Three O'Clock Blues." Bill was a connoisseur of music and he had it all.

He had another room that had been finished off for his trophies. That room had more trophies than anyplace I had seen. It had the Hall of Fame award, different footballs with scores on them, his pictures as a Cleveland Brown, and pictures of him as an All-Star. There were pictures of all the Browns in the Hall of Fame. There were pictures of his All-American honors from Ohio State. It was a shrine!

Bill always said that his brother Claude was better than he was, but never had the opportunity because he came too early. As I said, Bill didn't want to play in the backfield because of Claude. He gave Claude his kudos. Claude had tried to get a scholarship at Ohio State before Bill did, but according to Bill, was told he would be better off at a black school. So Claude played down in South Carolina. At Bill's funeral service, his pastor spoke these words to Claude:

> You know, [Claude], Bill trained to become a professional football player so he could catch up with you, his big brother, but it never happened. Whenever he spoke of what happened to him, he gave credit to you and the glory to God. He said he did what you couldn't do. He said you were faster and tougher and sleeker than he was, and better than he was, and he only wished that you would have had a chance at the NFL. He gave the glory to you.

Some older people say to me, "We missed the great Willis." Myself, I think Claude was a great football player, but it is hard to imagine anyone any better than Bill Willis. Bill is the only Ohio State guy who is in all the Halls of Fame: Ohio High School Hall of Fame, Ohio State Hall of Fame, College Football Hall of Fame, and Pro Football Hall of Fame. Bill is the only guy. Archie is in High School, Ohio State, and College. Bill is in them all.

Is Bill the best ever at Ohio State? He sure would be one of them. But it is hard to compare different eras. Of course, you have to think first of Chic Harley. Tippy Dye lettered in four sports, but he never won a Heisman. Hop Cassidy was awfully good. He played two sports and both ways in football. A lot of OSU people tell me Janowicz was the best athlete that has ever been here. I mean, who else has kicked a field goal in a blizzard? Vic did play some major league baseball, and he played for the Washington Redskins, but you know what, he isn't in any of those Halls of Fame. Archie has two Heismans, something no one else has ever done. But I don't know if any of them could run as fast as Bill Willis. I mean, name another lineman who caught Buddy Young *from behind*. The thing with Bill is that he had it all: the honors, the successful pro career, the class, the contributions to social justice, and the contributions to thousands of youth he touched after his playing days. Everyone else has had parts of that. Bill Willis had it all!

Ohio State retired Bill's jersey on November 3, 2007 in a fitting ceremony in Ohio Stadium. We almost didn't get it done in time. I had mentioned the idea to Gene Smith a couple of times, and Gene wanted to do it. Gene talked to some of our folks, and they said they would do it "next year." I said to him, "Gene, it can't wait another year."

Gene told people we had to do it, and this was even before Bill got sick. They said, "Okay, we don't have any time at half-time, we'll do it between quarters."

Gene said, "No, this is half-time, this is not going to be one of those between quarter deals."

The day of the ceremony in the stadium, when they came off the field, Bill's son, Bill Willis Jr., told the group of gathered reporters the story of how his dad found out it was going to happen:

> I'll never forget, it was the night before his birthday, and we had gone over to see him. The whole family was there.
>
> Dad said to us, "Jim Tressel called."
>
> "Yeah," we replied.
>
> And then Dad smiled. "They're going to retire my jersey!" We fell through the floor. You should have seen the look on Dad's face.
>
> Dad told us, "I can't even tell you how I feel because I feel so many things."

When the time came to hang that jersey, Bill's son's called me—because Bill was ill by this time—and said that Bill wanted me on the field with him when it happened. He wanted me and other people he was close to—his church family, people from his state career, his neighborhood—down on the field with him and his family. Those who meant a lot to Bill were there.

Before that event, while Bill was in the hospital, some thugs had broken into his house and stolen his 1942 national championship ring. Ohio State had another one made, and when Gene Smith presented it to Bill that day on the field, you could see his smile all the way from the sideline. I have experienced many emotional times in that stadium—big plays, big wins—but being there at midfield that day with Bill, and watching that #99 being unveiled on the north rim of the Horseshoe, well, it is right up there at the top. The ovation that day was thunderous. The applause went on and on. You could feel the love that people in that stadium had for Bill Willis and for what he meant to Ohio State. Bill Willis passed away just twenty-four days after that ceremony. Thank God they got it done in time and Bill was able to experience the honor he so deserved. Thank God Gene was there to get it done.

I was close enough to Bill that when his time came, his sons called me from the hospital to come be there. Bill's funeral service was befitting of the life he led. The eulogizers included a who's who of accomplished people: Gene Smith; Steve Perry, director of the Pro Football Hall of Fame; Mike Brown of the Cincinnati Bengals; Governor Strickland; and two of Bill's pastors. Each captured a different side of Bill. It was Bill's pastor, however, the Reverend Timothy Ahrens, of First Congregational Church, who captured the whole of Bill Willis in the last words spoken that day. When I remember my friend, I will remember the words of Rev. Ahrens, the words that closed the service. In his eulogy, Rev. Ahrens spoke of how Bill has "carried thousands and thousands," and how it is now our turn to carry them even further.

My All-Time Best: I am the luckiest guy in the world. I got to meet athletes at the top of the game in many sports. You might be thinking now, who does he think is the best? Good question. Jim Brown once asked me that, too. When ESPN listed their top fifty athletes of all time, they had Michael Jordan number one and Muhammad Ali number three. I told many people that I disagreed. Ali was a great athlete, but I don't think he was among the top three. One time, Jim Brown was visiting at Ohio State, and I told Jim that. I had my own list, I told him, and it was different. Naturally, Jim asked me where he was on my list.

"Well," I said to Jim, "I got you in my top five!" I then went on to tell Jim Brown that I have always thought that Jackie Robinson should have been the top athlete of all time, best athlete of the twentieth century.

"Tell me why you picked Robinson first," Jim said.

"Jackie had many things that the other guys didn't have," I told Jim. He was educated, having attended UCLA, where he was a tremendous all-around athlete on what was then the most integrated college football team in a segregated country. He lettered in four sports at UCLA: football, basketball, track, and, of course, baseball. He still holds the average for punt returns in UCLA football, eleven-plus yards per return for a career average. He was the second leading basketball scorer in the then Pacific Coast Conference, behind Hank Luisetti of Stanford, the first guy to shoot the one-handed shot. Everybody shot the two-handed shot until Hank came along with his unorthodox one-handed shot and truly revolutionized the way the game is played. And Jackie was the second leading scorer behind this guy! Jackie won the NCAA long

jump championship. Jackie and his brother are the only two guys from one family to jump over twenty-five feet. I think he is the only guy to ever letter in four sports at UCLA. Amazingly, baseball was his worst sport, yet today he is in the Major League Hall of Fame at Cooperstown. Jackie even won a California amateur tennis title. Beyond all that, though, the thing that made Jackie so good was that he did all this under more pressure, and with greater dignity, than anybody else. I just think he should be seen as the top athlete of all time.

I told Jim Brown just what I have told you. When I finished, Jim just reached out and shook my hand, and told me I had it right. "I couldn't have been first," Jim said. "I would have been in all kinds of fights, with all that Jackie had to put up with."

Jim asked the next question. "Who else do you have in your top three?"

"Well, I have Babe Ruth."

"Why do you have Babe Ruth?" Jim asked.

"Well, when Babe Ruth hit his sixty home runs, no *team* had even hit sixty," I said. "Babe individually bested every single *team*. And the second place guy to him that season was Lou Gehrig with forty-seven.

"I go with that," Jim said.

Then I told Jim, "I've got you there third because you gained 1,863 yards in 1963, at the time the NFL single season rushing record. The next guy was Alan Ameche, with something like 700 yards. And you were both running against the same competition. Now, today, we have a few guys that run 1,500 yards. But back then, there was only you. You were a three-time NFL MVP. You were an eight-time All-Pro and eight-time NFL rushing champion. At Syracuse University, you lettered in football, basketball, track, and lacrosse. You were an All-American in two sports. You were the second leading scorer on their basketball team, as a sophomore. You ranked second nationally in scoring in lacrosse. You competed in track in the decathlon and the high jump. No one will ever put up so many different accomplishments!"

"I go along with the way you are thinking about this!" Jim told me.

"I've got Wilt up there, too," I went on. "Wilt hit a hundred points in one game. He excelled at Kansas despite being triple-teamed and the opposing teams holding the ball for long periods of the game. Wilt was a seven-time NBA scoring champion and eleven-time rebounding champion. Wilt high-jumped six feet, ten inches. Wilt could run the 440 in under forty-eight seconds. He broad jumped twenty-two feet and threw the shot put fifty-five feet. Wilt Chamberlain did a lot of things."

That was what I told Jim, and that was the way I went about judging the greatest athletes of the twentieth century. My top four were Jackie, Babe, Jim Brown, and then Wilt Chamberlain. I was lucky enough to see three of the four in their prime! *The place you seek is seeking you.*

Although I was a football coach, all my life I had followed all the sports and all these different athletes. I had studied them and their accomplishments. In the fall of 1984, we were winning the Big Ten conference championship, playing in the Rose Bowl, and finishing ranked twelfth in the nation. As the calendar turned to 1985, I had no inkling of the role that athletic knowledge was about to play in the next turn of my journey.

Fourth Quarter

St. John Arena
Columbus, Ohio

1985

Chapter 22

BLAZING NEW TRAILS

At the close of 1984, I had been on Earle's staff for six seasons. You cannot coach at Ohio State without receiving offers, and I had them. People called me with opportunities to be a head coach, and I interviewed at a couple of universities, but I did not get the job. I had offers at smaller schools, but I would have made less than what I was making at Ohio State. That was a factor. I figured I owed a lot to Lorita, Debbie, and Billy. They had sacrificed much to enable me to coach; but the real thing is, once you smell the roses, once you have been to a Nebraska, and to an Ohio State, you cannot cut the other. You just cannot cut it. How many places can you go? I previously said I went from the outhouse to the penthouse, and the penthouse sure was better. After starting at a high school that had not won in eighteen years, I was roaming the sidelines of colleges that played for national championships.

Playing Second Chair: The University of Minnesota called and asked me to interview for their head football position my second year with Woody. I had mentioned how Woody, Dave Adolf, and I were in Cincinnati the night before I was to go up there. On the way back to Columbus that night, I asked Woody if he would help me get that Minnesota job.

"I think you have a better chance than the other people applying," Woody said, "but another guy on our staff has already asked me to recommend him, and I can't support two guys. But I think you have a better chance than the other guy, because you didn't apply; they came after you." That was true. I hadn't applied. Rather, Minnesota had called me. During that interview, I asked how important it was to be an alumnus of Minnesota. They told me that didn't make any difference; they were looking for the best man. I thought it did, though, because they gave it to a guy who had played football there. They also interviewed another black, Rudy Hubbard, our former backfield coach who had just had an undefeated season down at Florida A&M. At the time, I hadn't yet sat in that head coach chair in college, and Rudy had, and had this undefeated season. So I thought he should be the guy. But neither of us got the job. They gave it to the guy from Minnesota. It would not be my last interview at Minnesota, however.

I don't fault Woody for not supporting me. The other guy from our staff had asked him first, and there was no reason he should not support that fellow. You seldom get do-overs in life, and I didn't on this one. But I have wondered, would things have been different if I had gone after that job, and had been the first to ask Woody? Did the fact that Woody supported someone else hurt my chances? If I had been able to go after that job with the full force

of Woody Hayes behind me, would it have made a difference? We will never know.

There were not many black head coaches then. Do I think I would have been offered a head coaching job if I wasn't black? People have asked me that question. Some have told me probably so. However, I don't know that. Tom Osborne was asked whether things would have been different for me had there been more head coaching opportunities for blacks then, as compared to today. Tom probably gave as good an answer to this question as any:

> Those are things that nobody knows. To be a head coach you have to have some ability, but you also have to be lucky. Most of the time, you will find that when someone is hired as a head coach, it's because one of the key decision makers had some experience with that coach before. I don't think very many coaches are hired blind, where you send in your resume and then people look at that and call people in for interviews. Usually, there is somebody who has worked with that person as a colleague, or had that person coach for them before. Under the right set of circumstances, I am sure Bill Myles would have had an excellent chance.

While at Ohio State, I went to Nebraska to interview for the athletic director position. Bob Devaney really pushed Nebraska to name me their AD, and I talked with Tom Osborne about it. It was a different process compared to other places I interviewed at. The candidates were interviewed all over the state, with some of the interviews on television. I met with several academic deans. It was thorough. Bob Devaney fought hard for me. In fact, Bob and the university president got into an argument about that right in front of me one morning at breakfast. That was awkward. The president told him to "Shut up, shut up," and Bob kept on talking. Bob told him, "Bill's better than anyone you have coming in, but I know you are not going to hire him." I think the university president had his mind made up as to whom he wanted. I don't know that for sure. There were supposed to be three going for interviews, but the third guy called in sick. They postponed his interview and he eventually got the job. For whatever reason, it wasn't meant to be and I didn't get the job.

I had other opportunities to interview for head coaching jobs and for athletic directorships, including one Southern school in particular that rather irritated me. I was glad I didn't get that job and go there. During an interview for the athletic director position, I asked that school if it was a prerequisite to be a Baptist. It was a Baptist school and I was a Christian Scientist, so I thought it was a fair question.

"Why do you ask that question?" they asked me.

I told them I was reading the press guide. It said the president belonged to First Baptist Church, and that all the deans belonged to First Baptist Church. I also saw that the current football coach belonged to the First Baptist Church. "It's a Baptist school," I said.

I don't know if it upset them that I said that, although I had the feeling I had one of the best interviews I ever had. But they used me. When I got back,

they wanted me to fill out this card and send it back attesting that I was a minority. They asked me to interview, so I figured they wanted to say they had interviewed a minority candidate. Maybe I was wrong, but it bothered me enough that I just threw the card away.

In the end, it worked out best for me. Even though it was a school in a major football conference, going there would have been a long step down from Ohio State and Nebraska. The place reminded me of playing in high school. I looked at their locker room. It was just this big room, and the football players hung their equipment on hooks. That was the way their equipment room was, too. A lot of the equipment was stacked on the floor. I was thinking, wow, this is a long way back from where I am now. We didn't even have this bad a setup in the last high school where I coached. I looked at where the players were living, and I thought, "This is not the big time; this is a step back for me." I looked at the ads in their programs. They had a variety of soft drinks. At Ohio State, we had those companies bidding against each other to get into our place. It's called "exclusivity," where if Coke gets the contract, another soft drink like Pepsi can't come in. At Ohio State, we were only going to advertise one pop, one hamburger. If Wendy's got it, that kicked McDonald's and the others out. Whoever gave us the best bid got exclusivity.

I asked them if they had "exclusivity."

"We can't get exclusivity," they answered. I knew then it was going to be a big step back from what I was used to.

People have also asked if I ever considered stepping down to a smaller school to get a head coaching job. That was what Rudy Hubbard did, and he had a tough time following Jake Gaither at Florida A&M. As I said earlier, I was not willing to go back down from Ohio State. I will tell you what I would have done, though. If I hadn't been married, with a family, I might have gone to the NFL. I had several opportunities. Several professional teams offered me jobs. Alex Gibbs, Nick Saban, Dom Capers, Monte Kiffin, George Chaump, George Hill, and Dave Adolph are all guys that I coached with who made the jump to the pros. They were all successful. I could have been, too; I could have made it there.

In the pro leagues, you have to be there five years to get any stability. If you are there five years, you probably are secure. Before that, if a head coach gets in trouble, to keep from being fired, that coach often has to get rid of some assistants. So they fire some assistants, and that buys the head coach another two years. If you are one of those assistants, somebody else will pick you up, but you have to move your family. That means you move from place to place. And if you don't make it those first five years to get into that pension plan, then you are without a pension. The money is good, but it is not all sugarplums!

I know some guys like Dave Adolph who had a good run up there. Dave was "in the league" for over twenty-five years and did well. If I had been single, I probably would have tried it. But Lorita did a lot of things for me and my career, and that was one sacrifice I was never willing to ask of her. I was not willing to ask it of Billy and Debbie either, to put them in a position of potential upheaval. And I have no regrets. I made the right decision on those overtures.

Another factor was sneaking up on me too at that point in my life. After you get so old, no one wants to pick you up as a college assistant, either. Those guys have to recruit. They have to bring in the talent. They have to be on the road and relate to the youngsters. So as the calendar turned to 1985, there I was, in a holding pattern, riding Earle's fortunes—and subject to the risk that is tied to the success of the head coach.

What Do You Wanna Do? Dick Delaney was associate athletic director under Hugh Hindman and then Rick Bay. Dick was ill when we went to the Rose Bowl in December of 1984, and didn't make the trip. Since Woody hadn't trusted the athletic administrators, I had done a lot of the department's paperwork for him. That continued under Earle because Earle didn't trust all these other arms of the department any more than Woody. Remember, Earle had been brought up by Woody. He never wanted to say it, but Earle thought a lot like Woody. They both wanted everything done right, so I did it. I was responsible for the buses, and for things that other coaches would have a business office do. Hence, I had a lot of interaction with the athletic administration, but I didn't know how significant that would be.

In January of 1985, I went over to visit Dick Delaney at the hospital after we got back from that Rose Bowl game. Dick was a good friend and fighting cancer. One day soon after, his youngest son Kevin came by the office. He stuck his head in and said, "My dad just died."

"Our prayers are with you," I said as I tried to console him. He turned around and left. As he went down the hall, all of a sudden he just broke down.

Later on, well after the funeral service, Rick Bay called me to his office one day. He explained that he had been thinking about me for another position, and he inquired, "What are some of your ambitions? What do you want to do?"

"I really want to be a head football coach at a major college," I told Rick. "I've interviewed several times, but have not been successful in getting a job."

"I know that," Rick replied.

"I've interviewed for the head job at the University of Minnesota, and for some other head jobs," I explained. "These places are all waffling on me and I really don't know if they are interested in me or not."

"Tell you what," Rick said. "I want to offer you the position of associate athletic director. You will be in charge of all men's sports, including football and basketball. They will report to you, not me. Are you interested?"

Dick Delaney had been the first black athletic administrator at The Ohio State University, so if I accepted, I would become the second. It would be a change in the position. Dick didn't have any sports reporting to him. He was doing other things, including running the National Youth Sports Program, the same program that I earlier explained we had started back in Kansas City. I didn't want to do just that type of work, and I told Rick that.

Rick said, "No, all of the male coaches will report to you and the women coaches will report to Phyllis Bailey."

I looked at Rick. *I'm getting up in age, and I best do this now,* I thought. *Who is going to take a guy in his late forties to be a head coach? I've had some opportunities, but once you've been to Nebraska and Ohio State, once you've been to the*

penthouse, you're not going back to the cabin. So there I sat, being offered the job of overseeing both football and basketball at The Ohio State University. It was like Tom Osborne saying, "I want to talk to you." Still, I didn't bite right away.

"Let me think this over," I told Rick, invoking my forty-eight-hour rule. It was the same thing I told Tom Osborne, the same thing I told Woody. Forty-eight hours. Think it over. I went home to talk it over with Lorita.

I thought long and hard. I thought I could stay at Ohio State and continue to coach. I knew Earle. Earle knew me. We liked each other. We got along. We had been winning. But at a place like Ohio State, you are only as good as your last record. And I was forty-eight. "When I get five or six more years on me," I thought, "I will be hurting if the head coach gets fired and there is a staff shakeup. People aren't going to keep hiring me as an assistant coach." I had an opportunity before me.

I have never made any major decisions without Lorita, and this too I talked over with her. We made the decision that this would be a good move for me, and for the family. It was a tough decision, but looking back it was the right one. That was how I got into administration. The opportunity was not one I sought out, but it came to me. Rick Bay gave me the opportunity, but I was the one that decided to reach out and grab it. So I left the safety of the high dive, and dove into that new pool below called athletic administration. Once again, *the place you seek is seeking you, the place you need, needs you.*

Once we made the decision, I went over to tell Earle that I had decided to make the move. At first he reacted with surprise. "I would like you to stay on the staff," Earle replied. "I think you're doing a good job! I thought you liked coaching. Are you sure?"

"I really do like coaching," I explained to him. "I really want to be a head coach. But you've made other guys offensive coordinator, and I haven't been getting any promotions. I'm getting older, and I haven't advanced on your staff. I don't think at my age a lot of people are going to keep hiring me as an assistant if things go bad for you here."

"I didn't know that you wanted to be a head coach," Earle answered.

"It's nothing against you," I countered. "It's not a personal thing, but I think this move's going to benefit my family. I will do everything I can to help you be successful. If there is something you need, if it's reasonable, I will make every effort to get it." Earle wished me good luck and said he hated to lose me, and that was it. At forty-eight, after coaching football for twenty-three years, I was about to go in a new direction.

Of course, this changed my relationship with Earle. I don't want to say that it became a problem, and I tried hard not to make it that. But it was by nature about to become different. I had been working under Earle, and now he would be coming to me for things like budgets, etc. You don't get to be the football coach at Ohio State without having a strong sense of self-confidence and self-reliance, as well as ego, if you will. It didn't change the relationship a lot, because football is important and has always been my life. For Ohio State to be successful, Earle had to be successful, because he was the guy bringing in the money. It was just a new chain of command. When you have been working over a guy, and all of a sudden you are reporting to that guy, that makes it a little different. But we worked it out and it came out fine. It was a

bit amusing. When we had meetings, I would always offer to go over to Earle's office in the Woody Hayes, so he didn't have to feel uncomfortable coming to me. I could understand that, so I never made it a big deal. I just went over to his turf. Earle was good to work with. I knew the things he wanted and needed, having worked with him six years or so. We would meet on Mondays and Earle would tell me the things he wanted, and I would go to bat for him. It was a good relationship.

Although I became an administrator, I never quit coaching. I drew on everything I had learned about sports to "coach my coaches." I had new responsibilities, but I still thought like a coach. My job was to put the coach in a position where he or she had a chance to succeed. The coach needed the wherewithal—the salary comparable to others in the league, the budget comparable or above the others, the facilities as good as or better than our competitors. That was my job as an associate AD, to help the coach put the athlete in a position where the athlete can experience success. And if the coach doesn't do that, the coach has failed. More coaches fail than athletes fail. Look at the number of players who go to the pros and become a better player than they were in college.

That was the great thing about the four great coaches I had worked for. They could spot talent. They could tell you, put this guy over here, try this guy over there. When you have the ability to see that you can put a guy in another position, and he can be the difference in your team, then that is coaching. Bob, Tom, Woody, and Earle all did that, and those tidbits helped me become a successful coach and then an administrator. Instead of a coach asking what can this kid do, I was an administrator asking, "What can this coach do?" For me, it was always, "I'll take that guy. I'll take him." And those guys ended up playing. Because it went back to what I learned from Eddie. "What can he do?" If this is what he can do, then this is what I am going to feature for him. It goes back to the Little Victories. Did I get him where I wanted him, did I teach him this? Did I do my part? I was now in a position to ask those same questions of my coaches.

Great coaches say many things, just talking off the cuff, but I don't think people are paying them enough attention. I listened to the coaches who coached with me under Woody. They talked about how Woody treated those who worked with him, and I saw that. What I got from it is what Woody was really saying, "I like you, Bill. I don't like your actions, your jumping offsides. When you stop jumping offsides, Bill, we are going to be okay." I don't think others got that. They saw him hitting. They saw him cussing. They saw him hitting himself, throwing things on the ground, and constantly berating someone about not doing something; but what I saw in the end was different. I saw that he was saying, "I like *you,* Bill. I just don't like your actions."

Some of the men under him who went out to coach on their own tried to do it, but couldn't. They berated their players; but then they never got the player back on their side once they did that. They never got the guy to wash their back. They never washed the other guy's back like Woody did. People, including myself, laugh at Woody for doing that, but like everything Woody did, he had a reason. Some laughed at him, but they never figured out that

Woody had the last laugh; they never figured out that Woody did what he did for a reason, and it worked.

So as an athletic director, one of my highest priorities was to help my coaches be successful, to get them to the place where I "liked their actions." Of course, success is always defined by more than just winning on the field. It is success in the classroom, success in following the rules, success in the community, and success in life after football. My job was to see that my coaches and their programs were successful in all of those areas, not just in winning championships, and that was what I set about doing. Now, of course, one yardstick of success at Ohio State, with the resources available to the coach, means occasionally challenging for a national championship. If my coaches had the proper tools, then I expected that, too. There should be years when they challenge for a national championship in each of their sports. Of course, the expectation of the fans and media is a national championship every year. My job as an administrator was to put that expectation in context with everything else, including things the fans and the media sometimes didn't see.

Déjà vu: It turns out I was wise to make the move to administration. I had been through one turbulent time in OSU history when Woody was fired. Not even two years into my administrative job, I would experience it a second time.

In the fall of 1987, I went to a couple of Earle's Monday press conferences, which I think were still down at the Jal Lai Restaurant. Rick Bay did not particularly want me to go to them all the time. But the tenth week of the season, we lost to Iowa when they threw a touchdown pass on 4th and 23 with six seconds left in the game. Not only was it a tough last-second loss, it was the third loss in three weeks for Earle's team, and it knocked us out of a bowl game. After seven years with three losses, Earle's team had lost four. The heat was on. After the Iowa game, I asked Rick, "Do you mind? I'm going to Earle's press conference." Rick told me that was okay.

At the press conference that following Monday, the Monday of Michigan Week, Earle was very emotional. He was fighting for his job that day. Earle had his wife at his side that morning, and Coach defiantly said, "I'm staying at Ohio State. I like my job . . . there will be no more talk . . . I'm going to devote my time to Michigan and our football team." It seemed like he knew what was going to happen, even though it had not yet happened.

I drove back and pulled into the circle in front of St. John Arena, just as Rick Bay was walking out of the building. I rolled my window down and called Rick over.

"Rick," I said, "Our coach is really lobbying for his job. He's trying to prove a point that he really deserves to be here."

Rick stuck his head in my window and listened. Then he pulled his head out, straightened up, and said, "I'm on my way over to see the President." He turned and headed towards the Oval and President Jennings's office.

I parked my car and headed upstairs to my office in St. John Arena. Around lunchtime or a little after, Rick's secretary came around and said Rick wanted all the administrators back in the meeting room. I went to the meeting area, but Rick had not come back yet. Some of the other administrators

were sitting around talking and laughing, but not me. I was solemn. "What's the matter with you?" they asked.

"I've never been in one of these special meetings that they have called all of a sudden," I told them. "Something must really be up. We always know when we are going to meet. Rick wanted us all to meet right now, and he is not even here yet. I do not see anything funny."

Just then, Rick Bay walked in. "They've just fired our football coach," he said, "and I resigned." Everyone was stunned.

Then the phone rang and the secretary came in again. "The President wants to see Jim Jones," she said. Jim Jones, the senior associate AD, got up and left the meeting.

At that point, I told Rick, "Since I'm over football, I need to get over to the football building right now. I have to go over to the Woody Hayes and be with Earle." Rick told me to go, so I headed over there.

On my way out of the office, I told them to call and send some police officers over there. When I got there, we tried to lock the doors and keep people out. It was rough. It was real rough! I am sure the reporters did not like that, but I felt Earle had earned that. I felt he was due some respect, some privacy at a time like that. It was the same as I had felt when it happened to Woody, and I did it again for Earle, just as I had done for Woody. I would do it again to this very day.

Of course, Earle and I talked. It was not an easy conversation. How can you talk to a person who is experiencing this? A man who loves Ohio State more than most people will ever know. A man who has given his whole life to Ohio State. There was nothing this coach wanted to do more than play at Ohio State, and he got his knee hurt. There was nothing he wanted to do more than coach at Ohio State, and he got a chance to do that. What do you tell a man who had been the head coach and had done the job that he was doing? How do you talk to a man in that situation? What do you say? It was ripping his heart out.

By this time, people had gotten wind and were showing up. The police were keeping them up front, and I kept Earle in the back. His mind was all messed up. All his life, Michigan Week was sacred, and now he had just lost his job right in the middle of it. It was something. I felt for Earle. It was something to see a coach lose his job. It was hard. Real hard. I sat with Earle and tried to console him. There was not a lot I could say that was going to be meaningful. He would ramble, and talk about the highlights, or maybe a specific play. He would talk about our glorious moments, and then our lows. He would talk and I just sat there letting him get it off his chest. I ached for the man, but there was not a lot I could do. Regardless of how I felt, it was a done deal. I tried to be there for Earle, but not to be in his eyesight. I was in administration now and I did not want to interfere, but I wanted to be there for him, to be near so that if he needed something, I could still help him. It was just a rough situation for me, personally. As I have said, I owe Earle Bruce.

It was a bad deal. I had been there with Woody. When the head coach goes down, there are eight assistants going down with him. People do not realize that when they call for a coach's head, they are affecting eight other families. To Earle's credit, he did not make it rougher on me. I give him credit for that.

Some of his assistants said to me that week, "Bill, you gotta do this. . . . You gotta stop that. . . .You gotta get us our jobs back." Even up at Michigan, after we won that game the following Saturday, some of the assistants came in and told me, "Hey, you ought to be able to get this done now."

"I tried," I told them. "I'll try again. But you have to realize, this is a done deal. It is done. It happened. There is nothing I can do about it. I did not make this decision. Rick Bay did not make this decision. Jim Jones did not make this decision. President Jennings made this decision."

People have asked me if I saw it coming. Yes, I did; and I think Earle saw it coming, too. Towards the end of that season, there were reporters who kept coming to me up in the press box and asking if we could go to a bowl that year. Some of Earle's buddies would ask and they kept talking to President Jennings about it. Finally, against Iowa, the next to the last game of the season, the President had said if we win this game, we can accept a bowl bid. Of course, we were already bowl eligible, so there was a lot more to it. Then, in the last few minutes of that Iowa game—with six seconds, actually—Marv Cook caught a touchdown pass in the northeast corner of the end zone to give Iowa a two-point come-from-behind win. That was it. We did not win. We were winning until those last six seconds. We were going to a bowl, if we had won. Earle probably would have been saved because it would have been difficult to replace him after his team won. Who would have replaced him as coach? Six seconds. We were six seconds away from winning. It was that close.

From the press box, I watched Coach walk off the field after that Iowa game. He was going off and then he kind of stumbled. I do not know if he hit something and tripped, or if he realized, "I'm done." I have never asked him about that, and Earle never knew I saw it, but I was watching him the whole time. I was concerned. Remember, Earle saved my job. I learned a lot of football from him. I knew his family, knew his wife. You get close to their wives and close to their children, because their children play with your children at bowl games. As I watched from the press box in the fading light of that gray November afternoon, I was afraid for Earle. I was afraid for his assistants, and it turned out I had reason to be. Earle's time at Ohio State was fading, too.

When they fired Earle, Rick Bay resigned. Rick was the hero when it first happened. Here was a guy who was really fighting for his coach, and when he was told to pull the trigger, he resigned. Rick had played football at Michigan. He had been a Big Ten champion wrestler, and had been the last guy to win a Big Ten championship, before Iowa took over and made their run of umpteen million straight Big Ten championships. Rick had been a wrestling coach. Rick felt what a coach should feel.

Rick Bay was one of the smartest men I have ever been around. William Shakespeare wrote thirty-seven plays and Rick had seen them all. He was very much into the arts and music; he was a Renaissance man. Rick is the only person I know personally that has run under three hours in the Boston Marathon. He was different from many people in athletics. He knew about a lot of different things. Rick Bay was no pushover. Rick was the hero when he resigned. He told them, "If you're going to fire my coach, I'm going too." You

have to look at him as a hero. He sent the message, "I believe in Earle Bruce so strongly that I'm going to do this."

Rick did what he thought was right. But later on, people told me that no one would have known that Earle was being fired if Rick hadn't resigned. It was Monday of Michigan Week and they were not going to fire Earle until after the season. Earle turned around and beat Michigan. How are you going to fire an Ohio State coach who had just beat Michigan? Had Earle not been fired when he beat Michigan, we probably would have gotten a bowl bid. How are you going to fire a coach who just took Ohio State to a bowl game? Instead, it was a done deal before the Michigan game, before the team came out in Ann Arbor with EARLE on their headbands and upset the Wolverines. You are not going to fire an Ohio State coach who just beat Michigan, are you? You just cannot do it.

In his opinion, Rick did the right thing standing up for his friend. But by Rick resigning, and it becoming public so early, it sealed Earle's fate when a Michigan win might have saved it. A cruel twist of irony, isn't it? Of course, who is to know? Would Earle have won that game if they hadn't fired him? If the firing had not come out, would we have won that game? Would the players have rallied around Earle? Or would Earle have lost that game to Michigan, too, which would have made it even that much easier for them to do it? We will never know the answers to those questions, because Rick Bay stood up and did what he thought was the right thing. Rick took the hit, and Rick's decision took both him and Earle down.

The President Wants to See You: Jim Jones was named athletic director when he went to see President Jennings that day. Jim was one of the department guys that I had come to know real well before I went into administration. He was the academic guy for a long time under Woody, one of the first academic coaches in the country, as Woody was a pioneer of that concept.

Jim had been in the department back while I was still coaching, and he would come over to visit. We would talk. We had a lot in common. Jim liked basketball and he had coached basketball before he came to the university. He liked sports. We were about the same age; we had boys about the same age. Because Woody didn't trust "those pencil pushing SOBs," as he called them, I worked with Jim a lot, and he was pleasant to deal with.

Jim liked to coach, and we would talk about what we would do in different game situations. I told him about 84-Y Shallow, the play that made John Frank a legend. That was Jim's favorite play. Jim would watch 84-Y Shallow and say, "Gee, even I could throw that ball." He would sit up in the press box and say, "Why don't they throw that *84-Y* Shallow. It's been open all day."

Hugh Hindman had been great as the athletic director before Rick, and the guy out in front. Jim was Hugh's associate, and Jim did all the things behind the scenes for him. So Jim had a real good feel for the athletic department. Jim did the budget, and he was good with the pencil. (I called him "the pencil man.") Hugh was good at speaking and great at getting things the athletic department needed. But Jim was the guy behind the scenes that could do it all and had made a great contribution to Ohio State for many years. So he was a natural to take over when Rick resigned.

We Need A Coach! The dust hadn't even settled and Jim Jones and I had to find a new football coach. It was short notice, and recruiting was in full swing, but I had that little card in my pocket with all the top football and basketball coaches in the country. I had that list of coaches who I thought we could get, if ever necessary. Not that I was looking, mind you, but remember, I was an Eagle Scout and their motto is "Be Prepared." I was. I watched football on TV. I had met these guys at conventions. I knew them. And I was always asking myself, *Can this coach fit at Ohio State? Can he take the media? Can he take the fans? Can he live up to what Ohio State is all about?* This is one of the top jobs in the country. It's a plum. Could the coach survive and lead us in this environment?

People ask me about the process of hiring coaches at the Ohio State level. How do you go about it? How does it happen? What goes into it? Well, the first thing you always ask yourself is, "Is he clean?" That has to be overriding. Then you ask, "Does he win?" You've got to look at that. At a place like Ohio State, those two are not enough, despite the picture some of the media paints. You also have to ask, "Does he fit our community? Does he fit our state? What does he think about academics? What is he going to do for the athletes? Is he going just to use them, or is he going to have a program where he develops their total lives? What has he done in the past?" You go looking for all those things. At Ohio State, we ask all those questions. It is never just, "Can he win?"

Then you have to ask, "How much is it going to cost to get this coach?" You have the headhunters out there calling you, promoting different people. They will tell you that you can get this guy for so many dollars; another guy will cost you more. This guy would be a great fit; that guy wouldn't be as good of a fit. This guy has had experience dealing with the press, that guy hasn't. This gal would be a great fit because she has recruited your area for her sport. These headhunters are giving you all these things and giving you price tags on these people.

At the same time, I would be contacting people on that card in my pocket. Of course, these headhunters would have some of the same guys. They were no dummies. They knew who would fit your job. They are not going to give you some guy that won't fit your job. They know that the coach has to be kind of conservative to be here, that the coach at Ohio State cannot be the partying kind. Some coaches at other schools are real partiers. They will go out and do things. Everybody else does not know, but the inside people know. We know who are the skirt chasers, things like that. Certain schools will take that coach because he puts up those W's, but that will not fly if you are a coach at Ohio State.

It is not like you put a want ad in the paper. You have a pretty good idea of what you are looking for. The challenge is to find the person who is the best fit, who is available, and whom you can afford. You go through this dance and then normally you come up with a short list of people to interview and coaches you will go after. That was what Jim Jones and I did when Earle was fired.

The Guy Who Had Beaten Michigan: I knew John Cooper while he was an assistant coach at Kansas. I even played against John when he was captain

of his Iowa State team and I was at Drake. We also went back to my days at Lincoln High. When John was at Kansas, he would come into Lincoln and recruit our guys for the Jayhawks. He recruited Vernon Vanoy, the Lincoln athlete who went on to play for Kansas and then the Oakland Raiders. I knew of John Cooper. I would see him at the Duffy Daugherty and Bud Wilkinson clinic in St. Louis. We talked about football techniques and X's and O's when he came in to see me. I liked Coop and knew he did a good job at the University of Tulsa. Then he had the Coop De Ville when he beat Michigan in the Rose Bowl while he was at Arizona State. That is what you do when you are at Ohio State; you beat Michigan, and that year John proved that he could beat them!

John Cooper's name was on my list because he had been successful, but he wasn't near the top. It had been a long time since we had talked and I wouldn't say we were close, but we did remember each other. Then John called me cold one day and asked about the opening. He knew that I was the front guy and he told me that he was interested. He said, "Bill, I thought you would be interested in me."

"I am, John," I told him, "but I didn't think we could get you. You beat Michigan and we're always interested in that! But you're making a *lot* of money at Arizona State. I don't know if you would leave that." I knew what he was making. We had to worry in those days. Since Woody had never wanted raises, we were not paying our coach that much compared to other schools at the time.

"I'd be interested," John said. "I'd be interested in Ohio State because you have a chance to win a national championship there. I can't win a national championship here at Arizona State." I remember John saying, "*Everybody would like to go to Ohio State.*"

"Okay, we'll put you on the short list," I said. That was how Ohio State became interested in John Cooper. I told Jim Jones that John had called me to talk. I told him that I knew John, and that John was a good recruiter.

"How do you know that?" Jim asked.

"Well, he came into Kansas City and he just cleaned up," I answered. "John signed a lot of guys for Pepper Rodgers when he had that great run as coach at the University of Kansas and was runner-up for National Coach of the Year. He's won at Arizona State, and he just beat Michigan in the Rose Bowl."

Jim said he would definitely be interested, and did a background check on John and others we were looking at. John did a good job everywhere he had been. He had won championships in the Missouri Valley Conference; he had won championships in the Pac 10 at Arizona State. He was a person who could get along with everybody. He had a clean record. He wasn't a cheater. But looking back, ironically, the big thing John Cooper had on his pedigree was that *he had beaten Michigan*, and naturally, at Ohio State, you are interested in that. That was why we went after him. John Cooper had beat Michigan.

I was meeting John in Dallas for an interview, but my plane was delayed and I was late. John called my house and asked Lorita how he could get in touch with me. "Where's Bill?" John asked.

"I don't know," Lorita answered.

He said to her, "I'm John Cooper. I'm really John Cooper. He's going to interview me today." There John was, primed for a big interview, and I hadn't shown up. I could understand why he was alarmed.

"John, I just don't know," Lorita said, "he doesn't tell me where he is. I have no idea. I talk to him in the mornings; I talk to him late at night. That way I don't have to be untruthful about where he is. I really don't know where Bill is. But if he said he will be there, he will." I am sure John thought she was lying, but she was telling the truth. I never told Lorita where I was, because I didn't want her to have to fib to the press. When you hire a coach at Ohio State, it is a cat and mouse game, some cloak and dagger stuff. The press was always calling asking where I was. So I never told my wife where I was going, or with whom I was meeting. That way, if a reporter called, she could tell the truth.

When I got to Dallas, I remember going up to the hotel desk clerk and asking if the hotel had a reservation for so and so. The clerk said no. Darned if I hadn't forgotten who I was going to be that day. During the search, I always checked in under an assumed name. I had been different basketball and football players, as well as friends of mine. At one place I was Nathaniel Green, who had played basketball with me in high school. If they had asked me how to spell Nathaniel, I probably couldn't have done it! But on this day in Dallas, I forgot who I was. There was no way anyone was going to find me. Heck, that day, I couldn't even find me! I hit my head, and asked if they had a room for Joe Hill. They said they did, and so I signed in as Joe Eddie Hill, one of my former teammates. Of course, I paid cash. I am sure the desk clerk wondered, "Who is this guy and what is he up to?"

We finally all met the next morning to interview John. But before the interview started, John came over and said, "I called your wife Lorita and I told her, 'I'm a candidate, I'm John Cooper.' She wouldn't tell me anything!"

"John," I said, "She was telling you the truth. She doesn't know I'm here. She wouldn't even know who I am, if she knew I was here. I just call her every night and check in." I bet Coop thought, "What's up with this guy?"

President Jennings was there, Jim Jones was there, Madison Scott was there, as was a member of the Athletic Council, Board of Trustees, and a few others. Our group had been other places to interview people but that day we interviewed John. I thought he did a good job in answering all the questions. So did Jim, and the president agreed with that. But I was afraid John had slipped up. One of the faculty members that we had present didn't like him, because he called President Jennings "Pres." That faculty representative thought it disrespectful. President Jennings took care of that, saying it wasn't a problem. Then we all left Dallas and flew back to Columbus.

I learned a lot from interviewing guys to replace Earle. During the search, a prominent coach came to my home in Columbus to be interviewed for the job. We were not going to interview this coach, period. In our mind, he wasn't really a candidate, but he insisted on getting the interview. He wouldn't give up, and he was a well-known professional football coach in Ohio. So I said he could come to my house for an informal talk. Jim agreed to come, and we set it up as informal, just my way of getting him off our

backs. We had no intention of granting the guy serious consideration with the selection committee. We had our chat. When we finished and went out my front door, there was the press waiting in front of my house. The guy had called them and tipped them off! The waiting press saw him leaving. They took a picture of him, and it made the news that we were interviewing him. I thought to myself, "This guy worked me." Once he did that, he really didn't have a chance. He worked me, he got his name out there, but he sure didn't have a chance of ever being the football coach at Ohio State. Not after he pulled that shenanigan.

I also had a minority coach stand me up during this same process. We had already interviewed one minority candidate out East. I had an interview set up for another one, and he called me the night before we were going to interview him in Texas. He called and said he didn't think he was up to it. I was really teed. I told him, "Look. I went out on a limb. I think you're qualified. You called me. You thought you were qualified. You wanted the job. You're our candidate, and now here you are, backing out on me the night before. I have my president here. I have one member of the Board of Trustees here. I have the athletic director, my boss, here. *And, you're going to back out on me now?*"

"Oh Bill, I just can't do it," he said. "I'm not ready for this interview."

"You don't think that you have the knowledge?" I asked.

"Yeah, I got the knowledge," he said.

I said, "Well, you were a cocky soul talking to me before, and now you're backing out on me."

"Do you understand?" he pleaded.

"No, I don't understand," I answered him, "but I'll make it. You're not tough enough for this job. I'll tell the president that we don't have you for an interview." And that was it for that guy.

John Cooper wasn't the only coach we interviewed. John Cooper had a good interview, but so did some of the other candidates. We had some outstanding prospects, and there were about three or four candidates on the final short list. But John had that one thing going for him that they didn't. John had beaten Michigan. So the decision was made; and that was how John Cooper ended up at Ohio State. Ironically, it all started because John Cooper had shown he could beat Michigan.

Looking for Bill Myles: I got in touch with John and made the offer. Once John accepted, I had to go get him. He was playing a bowl game in California, and I was to go get him after that game and bring him back for the announcement. It is hard to keep those things under your hat. We were going to announce it the next day, but by this time, most people had heard rumors that John Cooper would be the next coach of the Buckeyes.

It is always a game of cat and mouse to hire a coach at this level. The press is always digging, trying to find what you are doing. And of course, understandably, coaches you are courting don't want it out in case it doesn't work out. So you go through the gyrations. The press went out to the Port Columbus airport looking for me. But I wasn't there, which brings me back to that airstrip, where I first started this story. On the morning of December 30, 1987,

I headed out to that farm outside of Columbus and got on that private plane I told you about. When we left the private airstrip, it was just as I described, only the two pilots and me on the plane. No one knew where I was going. Even the people on the ground didn't know where we were headed. They thought we were going somewhere in Florida. The pilots took off and we headed south for a while. When we had been in the air awhile, they radioed the ground that they had changed our flight plan. "There's some turbulence," they said, and told the ground they were flying west for a while, around the weather, and then heading south.

There are things you remember all your life. This was one of them. I remember sitting there, and there were these two pilots up front, and it was just them and me. Now this was a very nice private plane, owned by one of the wealthiest guys in Columbus, and it was just those two pilots and me. I leaned back in the plush leather seats and thought, *"If the boys back on 43rd and Broadway could see me now! If they could just see this little boy from Westport. I've got two pilots flying me. I'm no longer the chauffeur; these guys up front are the chauffeurs. I'm the one riding in style. Fly me till I sweat!"*

We landed at John Wayne Airport in Orange County, south of Los Angeles, and an OSU alumnus picked me up. We went into a sports bar, and as we were in the back eating (I am not a drinker) we were watching the TV showing Arizona State playing Air Force in the Freedom Bowl at Anaheim Stadium. As we were sitting there, the TV broadcaster said, *"We're looking for Bill Myles but we haven't seen him yet.* We haven't seen him yet, but he's got to be somewhere in the stadium. He's out here to hire John Cooper as the next Ohio State coach." There I was, watching in the restaurant, and they were talking about me being in the stadium to hire John Cooper!

Arizona State won that game, 33-28. Afterwards, Cooper went back to the hotel. He knew the plan. John and his family came out the back of the hotel. I picked them up, and we rushed back to John Wayne Airport. I had told him, "John, you have to hurry because they don't let any planes take off at John Wayne after 11 p.m. to keep the noise down." We flew back on the red-eye and landed at that same farm. The farm owner picked up John's family in his car and put them up. He was to take care of them until the press conference at the Woody Hayes facility the next morning. I got in my car and drove home, content we had secured our new coach.

The next morning, I called Kirk Herbstreit on the phone. "Kirk, you know I talked to you earlier. You're going to commit to Ohio State, aren't you?"

Kirk said yes.

"John Cooper is going to talk to you a little bit later," I told him. "I told him that we had you. You're our quarterback of the future, and I want you to be the first guy he talks to." I got Kirk on the phone after John's press conference, and John talked to him. Herbstreit committed. That is how we got John Cooper, and that is how we signed Kirk Herbstreit.

The Cooper Years: John inherited thirteen starters. But only five were on defense, and many positions lacked depth. Coop's first game was on September 10, 1988, against Syracuse, a nationally televised game before one of the largest opening day crowds in Ohio Stadium history. It was still in the days

when you were not on TV every week. Syracuse came in riding a fourteen-game winning streak, but the Buckeyes gave the fans a 26-9 win. The amazing thing about that game was that it was the first game I was ever around with no penalties on our team. Ohio State did not have one penalty or commit one turnover. Historian Jack Park wrote it was the first time that had happened in twenty-seven seasons. John Cooper was riding high after his first game as a Buckeye.

It didn't last. The second game was at Pittsburgh, a night game and sellout in Pitt Stadium. Ohio State was embarrassed 42-10, as the Panthers outgained the Buckeyes and led in first downs and in time of possession. The Bucks lost two fumbles, threw one interception, and committed seven penalties. John Cooper went from Heaven to Hades in one week.

The roller coaster wasn't over, though. John and the Buckeyes bounced back in a game against LSU that is one for the chronicles of Ohio Stadium history. It was the first time since 1935 that a Southeast Conference team had come into Ohio Stadium. Deep in the fourth quarter things looked bleak, and the Buckeyes trailed by thirteen points. It had been raining, so many of the soaked fans started for the exits. Then, with just two minutes left in the game, Ohio State scored two touchdowns and a safety. As they heard the roar of those late scores, fans outside the Stadium started running back in, to see the Buckeyes win 36-33, a game they had given up on. John Cooper was on his way.

I think John was surprised when he got here. He thought there would be more talent than there was. John was a great recruiter and that was why I wanted him. John was one of the recruiters that I watched as a high school coach. John could get you. He had that silver tongue. He could say what a player or a parent wanted to hear, in a convincing way. He was a super salesman and could get them. That was why he thought this would be such a great job for him. I mean, he got them to come to Tulsa when he was recruiting against the Oklahomas and Nebraskas of the world.

Look at the number of players who went to the NFL during John's time at OSU. He brought in great talent. He had a Heisman Trophy winner in Eddie George. He had an Outland and a Lombardi Trophy winner in Orlando Pace. He had a lot of number one and number two draft picks. Orlando. David Boston. Shawn Springs. In 1994, John had one of the greatest pair of tackles we had ever had in Orlando Pace and Korey Stringer. That pair is right up there with Woody's Darrell Saunders and Bob Vogel in the early '60s, and then John Hicks and Kurt Schumacher in the early '70s. John Cooper brought great players to Columbus.

John's record was good. He won three Big Ten championships. Twice he was on the brink of a national championship. John Cooper did everything here but one thing. Of course, everyone knows the rub. He just didn't beat the School Up North. Otherwise, John Cooper would be a legend. Only one coach at Ohio State won more games than John Cooper did, and that of course was Woody. John just couldn't win what Lee Corso calls the "Job Saver Game." Until Cooper came here, if you lost that game three years in a row, you were gone. Either school, you were gone. Look at the record book. Even Woody was gone when he lost three in a row. John Cooper lost his first three games

to Michigan and tied the fourth. It took him six tries to beat that School Up North the first time, and his thirteen-year record against them was 2-10-1. It just didn't work out.

People ask me why John struggled with Michigan. Fate? Luck? Preparation? Attitude? Approach? Michigan did have great players at the time, but we had great players, too. We had a huge number drafted under John. I don't know if John was able to get through to the team that he thought the game was that important. He did think the game was important, and he knew he was here to beat Michigan. The guys got so wound up talking about it that he said a couple of times, "Don't make them bigger than they are." People got the wrong impression of John because of that. Other coaches put them on a pedestal, said we had to play lights out to win, things like that. The game meant just as much to John Cooper as it did to all those who came before him, but he took a different approach.

There are jokes about his record with Michigan, but it wasn't funny to Coop, and it wasn't funny to me because I know the guy. He tried hard to win that game. He tried different ways. Sometimes, he might have made it too big. He might have gotten the guys too tight. But he did try different approaches. I doubt if anybody outside the rivalry has ever been in a game like that. Earle grew up in it. Woody grew up in it, since they lived in Ohio. Tressel grew up in Ohio, and he watched that game every year with his dad. John did not. John did not grow up in this area, and that was a disadvantage. Nevertheless, he tried as hard as anyone could to win that game. He just couldn't pull the trigger.

John had a different style. John was more of a supervisor. Woody and Earle really coached a position. They coached the whole team, where Cooper stood off on the side. John took part in the meetings; but he supervised, the model used by coaches in the Southeast Conference yet today. Now I was in his meetings, and Coop knew everything that was going on. He knew the offense. He knew the defense. He was in command; but he didn't coach any position himself. Not that that was bad. They did it that way at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, where John was born and raised. They all did it. They stayed up on a tower. Bobby Bowden did it. Bear Bryant did it. Why, those two men are in the top winning coaches of all time. When we played Alabama, Woody was in the huddle calling plays, and there was the Bear just standing over there watching the game.

John came in doing that, but people here were used to seeing Woody coaching the running backs and in the huddle calling the plays. When we went to Earle, he coached the same way as Woody. Coop knew what was going on but he "coached the coaches." Only people on the inside saw that. I got to see it, but most people didn't. That hurt Coop in the eyes of the public.

Some of it, too, is how you were brought up. Coop was just eight years removed from Woody Hayes, who was just a legend. Woody was on the sidelines with his gyrations. He drove this old beat up El Camino automobile. Then you had Earle cut from the same cloth—AWoody Hayes II. Suddenly, here came Coop in that hot tub ad that I know he wishes he had never done. And here came the guy who let his defensive coordinator and his offensive coordinator do the things that Woody and Earle used to do. Don't get me

wrong. I was on the sidelines. If it was fourth and one, John was the one deciding if we were going for it or not. John was calling the strategy. But overall, his was just a different approach to coaching.

There wasn't anything wrong with his way. It was just different from Woody and Earle, and Woody and Earle had been successful. The thing that was wrong with it was not the way he coached. It was that he couldn't beat Michigan and that is what counted. John Cooper twice finished ranked number two nationally, and was several times a play or two away from playing for a national championship. People forget that.

Some of it is fate; there are those games where a little thing makes the difference. There was the game where John had it won, and our defensive back Shawn Springs slipped on the damp turf. Shawn Springs was the third player drafted that year. He played twelve seasons in the NFL; he was a Pro Bowler. Yet in 1996, in Ohio Stadium, he slipped on one play against Michigan. John had that game won. He also had a game up in the Big House where he was in good shape, but something happened. They made that football oblong for a reason. It doesn't always bounce right. In John's case, it just didn't bounce right against Michigan.

Of course, had John won just a few more, not much would have been said about his approach. Of the ten games Coop lost to the Blue, five were by seven points or less. Two were by a field goal, and there was the one where our back slipped. If Coop could have won just three or four of those five close games, his record against Michigan would have been nearly .500. That would have bought him enough time and goodwill to remain at Ohio State. Those losses were all that close. But close isn't good enough against the Blue. As Dad said, at the end of the day all that matters is, "Are you on the left hand side of the page?" Too many times, John Cooper was a right-hander.

It's too bad. John Cooper is a good man. He could have become a bitter person after what happened, but he didn't. John Cooper loves Ohio State. There are a couple of people he might not care for, because he thinks they did him wrong, but he has nothing against The Ohio State University or the football program. He has expressed that to me several times. He has stayed here, been visible, and been nothing but supportive. He loves the place.

I was out of football administration when they let John go, and I am glad I did not have to be part of that. Coop had a lot of things happen to him. He had high standards himself, but he might not have been tough enough with some of his assistants, and some of them let him down. John always stood up for his coaches, and I have to admire him for that. He had some trouble with the players at the end, but I would think it was more the adults than the players. When John was let go, there was talk that he had lost control. I don't think John had lost any more control than any other coach. When you get those high profile guys, and they are competitive people, some of them get in trouble. That happens to a lot of coaches.

Of course, Ohio State helped John Cooper make it into the College Football Hall of Fame. When John was an officer in the coaches' association, he lobbied for the requirement that you had to win two hundred games to get into the Hall of Fame. John made the Hall, and he won two hundred games

because of what he did at Ohio State. John Cooper is a good man, a good coach, and he deserved it.

Another Fork in the Road: When Jim Jones became my boss, he was someone familiar. Even so, in 1988, I was unprepared for yet another looming twist in the road. It turned out new football and basketball coaches were not the only new ground I broke in The Ohio State University Athletic Department. In June of 1972, just three months after I had become an assistant coach at Nebraska, the United States Congress passed *Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972*. The landmark law stated:

> *No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.*

Little did I know then how this simple sentence would later impact my life. It did under Jim Jones.

Phyllis Bailey was also an associate athletic director under Jim Jones. Phyllis had been at Ohio State long before I got there, and before Jim took the helm. She was a genuine, beautiful person. Phyllis had been involved in women's athletics at Ohio State long before the inception of Title IX, and she knew how to fight for equity and equality. She fought for certain things and got them, but she knew when to pick her battles. Some things were not that important, and she did not bother with them.

Phyllis was our first women's basketball coach. Phyllis, an administrator at Iowa, and a woman at Illinois, were national leaders in Division I women's athletics. Phyllis was friends with women administrators all over the nation, because being at Ohio State makes you a leader. Our Women's Athletic Program got its foundation for success because of her. Phyllis had a lot to do with it being such a successful program today. Phyllis was tactful. She was tough but feminine. She was intelligent, but did not hold that over you; she knew how to fight for women's programs, and how to get things done.

Phyllis had seen college sports from every level—from intramurals to varsity athletics to coaching to being women's associate athletic director. When I first arrived at OSU as a coach, Phyllis was someone you wanted to know. She had been fighting the battles for women for a long time, even within her own university. Years before I went into administration, she welcomed me and showed me the ropes. She introduced me to people on campus who could help us. We went many places together, and I respect her immensely.

When I went into administration, most of Phyllis's early battles were over, but there were still some underneath things, and people would wonder, "How is Phyllis Bailey going to look at this?" Usually, the way she looked at it was the way it ended up being.

When Jim took over, he decided it was time to reorganize. We had gone as far as we needed to go in establishing a women's intercollegiate program. Now, in the spirit of Title IX, we had to have *one* intercollegiate program. It was no longer to be men's athletics and women's athletics, but intercollegiate

athletics. In 1988, Phyllis got wind that Jim was thinking about reorganizing. One day she went to him and asked, "Jim, I understand you're thinking about reorganizing the department."

Jim told Phyllis, "Well, yes I am, and I was going to talk to you and Bill about it." I had better defer to Phyllis, and let her tell how that came to pass, and tell of the working relationship we developed:

> Bill was a great addition to the athletic department because Rick Bay wanted someone to oversee football, and there's nobody who knew football better than Bill Myles did. Bill was a highly organized guy, and could take care of all the little details that needed to take place. I admired Bill for having things so well put together and for the insight to the situations that he had. Bill always had a nice sense of humor and an easy way of going forward with the program when he was doing men's sports.
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> When Jim Jones became the new athletic director, he was in the process of reorganizing administration. One day he told me that he had some notions of what he thought ought to happen and asked what I thought should happen.
>
> I asked, "Well, are you thinking about giving us responsibility by sport rather than by sex?"
>
> He said, "Yeah, that's exactly what I want to do. Would that be upsetting to you?"
>
> "Not at all," I told Jim. "Well, you don't have to take my ideas, but I'd like to make a suggestion. The time has come where the women's program can stand on its own two feet, and we have arrived at the point where we need to divide everything up by sport. That way we don't have, for example, the men's swimming coach going to Father and the women's coach going to Mother, and we're giving them different answers. We're trying to say that we're working towards equality here and that Title IX has dictated that we are going to work for equality. I don't think we can do it separated anymore. There is just one thing I will ask. In your own eyes do you consider the job that Bill Myles does and Phyllis Bailey does, as your two associate directors, to be equal?"
>
> Jim said, "Yes."
>
> Of course, then I had him. I said, "All right, then, you cannot give football and men's basketball to Bill Myles and have anything that comes close to equality. If Bill and I have comparable jobs, and our titles indicate that, he can't have both football and men's basketball."
>
> Jim said, "Oh no, I wouldn't do that. I already have it marked down that he will do football, and you will do the two basketballs."
>
> I told Jim that I thought that was the better way to go. Obviously, Jim had already talked to Bill. Bill thought that was a good idea too, so we just split things by sport rather than by gender, and we thought that was a real step forward.
>
> At the time we split things by sport, rather than by sex. For all of the women who worked with Bill, he just took them in very easily and

they got along beautifully. I always felt good about that, because many of them had worked only for a woman. To have him make them so comfortable was a very pleasant experience for them and a very satisfying experience for me. In that process, I was also impressed with the fact that Bill was knowledgeable about all the sports in the program. He wasn't just a football man. He understood the other sports and understood the women's sports. Bill was supportive of them. I did the same for the men, but it was easier for me, I thought, because the men had been there for a long time.

I think that Bill's background of being a minority—he was challenged in ways that were different from ways the women were, but it was that same feeling—gave us sensitivity for each other that might not have existed otherwise. Each of us understood what the other had gone through.

When they later made the next change and Bill would go over to the Jesse Owens Sports Complex, it was a very tough time for Bill. I don't think he deserved it. But he kept up his spirits and kept going, and the public would have never known anything was different. It was a tough time for him, but I don't think the coaches knew that and I don't think the athletes knew that, because Bill was one that could ride with the situation. He never was a bitter man. He did wonders for those programs. All the Jesse coaches under Bill worshiped him and felt that way about him. The athletes felt that way about him, because he was sincere and genuine in his feelings for both the coaches and the student athletes. They felt that.

I always believed I wasn't the most brilliant administrator OSU could have gotten to run the women's program in those early years, but it was my good fortune to be in the right place at the right time. From time to time, Bill and I discussed his sense of *place*. But with Bill, and with myself, I hope, it was not only being in the right place. It was being equipped and having the vision to take advantage of it, and to rise to the occasion to do what needed done to be successful in that place. Bill Myles was very good at that. He was devoted to the development of athletics to the very best of his thinking and upbringing as to what should be right. The student athletes were number one with him.

This is a silly illustration but I always got a kick out of it. In the beginning of the period when men started wearing caps everywhere, Bill was a little annoyed with that trend, as were the rest of us. When an athlete would come walking down the hall with a cap on his head, all of a sudden, I would hear from my office, "I didn't know it was raining in the hall?" The kids got the message. Soon they were pulling their hats off about the time they got to my door, before Bill could see them. It was just one of his pleasant ways of teaching a message.

That was how Jim, Phyllis, and I decided to divide things up by sport rather than gender. To make women equal we needed to give her a revenue sport. Since only football and men's basketball made money, Phyllis took men

and women's basketball, as well as some of the men's sports. I took football and some of the women's sports. It was about as equal as you could get and that was a big step in 1988.

It was ironic. I was a product of a segregated childhood, a beneficiary of *Brown v. Board of Education,* a beneficiary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and there in the pinnacle of my career, I was on the frontlines of Title IX, another move towards equal opportunity. My experiences and background gave me a grander vision to support this, and willingly give up some sports, where others might have taken it as a threat.

Phyllis and I made it work. We had a wonderful working relationship. I am proud to have blazed this trail with her in OSU athletic history. In my mind, Phyllis Bailey would be right up there with the all-time greats of associate athletic directors. In fact, I would put her up there with the legendary OSU athletic director, Lynn St. John. She was that good!

No One Was Here, Al: Phyllis mentioned my sense of humor. It is a treasure my parents gave me, and I always attempted to keep it, even in the midst of serious work. Soon after I had become associate AD, my friend Allen Bohl was on the receiving end of that, in an incident that became legendary among those in the department then. Al was over the fundraising arm of the department under Rick Bay. Al was a nice guy who went on to become a successful athletic director, first at Toledo, then Fresno State, and finally the University of Kansas. He also authored *Back Porch Swing*, a popular book with some Ohio State settings. Al was a good friend, but trusting, and you could easily pull his leg.

Jim Jones was gone one day, and I was second in command behind Rick. Al hadn't been in for a couple of days. Al usually came in early in the morning, as did I, and one Saturday it was just the two of us in the office in St. John Arena. I said to him in a firm voice, "Al, where've you been?" I continued in a more direct voice, "Al, we had people come in wanting to give to the department, and no one was down there. Where were you?"

"Well, Bill, I was out playing golf and raising funds."

"Al," I interrupted in a stronger voice, "you were playing golf! How many times have you played golf and not made anything out there? Al, we had people right here, ready to give. *And you were out playing golf with some supposed donor?"*

"Did you take care of them?" Al shuddered. "Did you—"

"No, that's not my job, Al," I interrupted him. "That's not my job, Al, I don't do that. But when Rick gets back, I have to tell him nobody was around here from your section to accept the gift somebody was ready to give this department." Al was getting all red in the face, but I kept on, "I'm sorry, Al. It's my job. I've got to tell Rick. He's not going to like this one bit." I was about to crack up by this time, because Al was believing every word of it. So I walked over to the window, turned my back to him, and started talking to the outside so he couldn't see me laugh. "Dadgum, Al, these were *big hitters*. These were big hitters Al, and we missed the boat. All because there was nobody here."

Al was getting redder and redder and walking around, making excuses, talking this and talking that. "We gotta go out with people," he argued.

I continued to look out the window and asked, "How many times do you play golf, Al, and don't get anything? You play three times and get something?"

"Not always," Al answered.

"You've got to play seven or eight times before the guy comes through," I kept on, "and we had a guy who was here with a big, fat checkbook, wanting to give, and you're out there playing golf!"

Al was getting worried, and walking back and forth, and finally he pleaded, "You don't need to tell Rick. Please. You don't need to tell him."

I kept on. "Al," I told him in my strongest voice yet, "it's my job. We depend on your department to bring in the money, and *you're not doing the job.*"

Al just kept getting redder and redder. I was still looking out the window, with my back to him trying to keep it going. I was biting my lip, and trying to contain my belly from quivering like a bowl of Jell-O. Finally, I just couldn't hold it any longer. I turned back from the window, and blurted out laughing. "Al, I was just pulling your chain."

I will never forget it. Al put his head down on the desk, pounded his fist, and then he said, "I knew it. I knew you were a Christian, I knew it. I knew you were a Christian!"

Al was a good sport about that, unlike many other people would have been. Listen to Al still laugh about it:

> Bill sure did have me that day—he reeled me right in with his great storytelling ability. Afterwards, and even now as I look back, I have always loved Bill's retelling that story because it displays his great wit and humor. I was a young administrator in those days and learned a lot from just watching and being around Bill.
>
> It was not required that we come in on Saturday mornings then, but Jim Jones, Bill Myles, Dan Meinert, and I would always show up. Each of us would work for a few hours, and then we would regularly end up in Jim Jones's office and sit at the table in the back. I would have my cup of coffee as we discussed the department, politics, coaches, boosters, and any other subject that popped up. During these informal meetings, I really came to know Bill. All I had to do was be an artful listener. I learned that Bill was a great family man. I learned that he was a Christian! I learned that he cared about his coaches and the student-athletes. His values of work ethic, character, integrity, as well as teamwork, were not hard to pick up on, as he would comment on any subject we would bat around. I like to think that I became successful as an athletic director because of this, but more importantly, I became a better dad and a better husband.
>
> When I wrote *Back Porch Swing*, I gave Bill a small scene. In the book, Lance Stoler and his relatives are going into the Woody Hayes Center on a recruiting visit, and the first person they meet is the character modeled after Bill Myles. If the book ever is turned into a movie,

I am sure Morgan Freeman would play Bill's part, and Morgan's deep, distinct, melodious voice, his stately presence, and the twinkle in his eye, all would be the perfect character of Bill Myles.

Refresh Your Coffee? As an associate in the department, I was involved in hiring basketball coaches, too. We hired several Ohio State basketball coaches while I was in administration, including Gary Williams and Randy Ayers. I learned things every time we did that.

In 1986, two years before Earle was fired, Rick Bay, Jim Jones, and I were part of the group that hired Gary Williams. Before we hired Gary, though, I made the initial call to Syracuse to ask to talk with Jim Boeheim. Jim's number was on the card in my pocket, so I called to get permission for OSU to interview him. The Syracuse athletic director answered, "Well, I'll let you talk to him. Jim's standing right here; but I don't think he is interested." Well, what was Jim going to do, tell me in front of his AD that he wanted to talk to someone about leaving? He told the athletic director to tell me he was not interested in Ohio State, and I said okay.

It was not five minutes later when I was sitting at my desk and the phone rang. It was Jim Boeheim, calling from his office! Jim said, "I couldn't talk in front of my boss there." Jim was interested.

Rick, Jim, and I flew to Syracuse. I learned a lot from that interview. Boeheim picked us up at the airport and took us to his house. We interviewed him, and we were working on him and asking him questions, leading up to the hard one. I had him in a corner where I thought, "He's gotta do it, he's gotta say yes to us." We were ready for the hard question. Well, don't you know, about that time, his wife came in with some refreshments. She brought coffee and a plate of pastries, so we broke for desserts. Of course, then I had to back up and make another run at him. So we asked him some more questions, and we got him once more back there at the point where we were just ready to pop the question.

"Can I refresh your coffee?" Jim's wife asked as she interrupted again.

I learned right then that you never interview a guy at his own house! Every time we would get him pinned, she saved him. I think she had her ear right next to that kitchen door. I don't know. She might not have wanted to leave, or he might have schooled her. In any case, I never got him to answer the hard questions. I wanted to ask him about his program, and what he wanted to do for us at Ohio State, some things like that. I couldn't get to his philosophy about handling players, what he would do as far as discipline, some questions like that I was working up to. All I had to go on was what I saw him do on the floor as a coach. Jim's wife flat out saved him with those pastries. I never could get him to commit to coming. Finally, he took us back to the airport, and we flew home. We interviewed some more guys, and then we hired Gary Williams.

It got Jim a raise, and I don't blame him for that. He may have used me for more money, but I really thought he was interested. I think he might have thought it was easier to win in the Big Ten than in the Big East at that time. I think Jim was interested, but I don't know if his wife wanted to leave. Jim went to Syracuse, he had played at Syracuse, and he had been there all his

life. So I don't know if she wanted to leave, if he wanted to leave, if neither wanted to leave, or if he was just using us to get a raise. But it taught me. Burn me once, I chalk it up to experience. Burn me twice, I am dumb. So I never interviewed anyone else in their home.

Of course, all Jim has done since then was go on to become the second winningest NCAA Division I basketball coach in history. He has more wins than Bobby Knight, more than Dean Smith, more than Adolph Rupp! What would have been if we had gotten him to come to Columbus? As I said, when I saw talent, that was a name I put on my card.

Randy Ayers: Randy Ayers was another coach hired during my watch. That came in 1989, after we had split the sports and I was no longer over basketball. But I was still in the department and thus involved. Randy was a good recruiter, and was the OSU assistant who got Jimmy Jackson. It was one of the greatest things he ever did. Right after Jimmy Jackson committed, Gary Williams decided to leave for Maryland. So Randy Ayers got to coach Jim Jackson. Of course, Jimmy didn't let him down. He won a couple of championships while he was here, and they went quite a ways in one of the tournaments. People might forget; Randy Ayers beat Michigan's Fab Five, beat them four out of five times they met. He beat them when they were freshmen—here in Columbus and there in Ann Arbor—and beat them when they were sophomores here and there. The only loss was in overtime down in Kentucky in the NCAA tournament, the one that counted the most. Randy won a lot of games while he was here.

Randy, too, was loyal to some of his assistants, and it cost him—it cost him his job. Assistants do much of the recruiting, and Randy's assistants brought in some guys that were not good players. On top of that, the kids got in a lot of trouble. This hurt him. Randy Ayers could have booted a couple of coaches, cleaned up the act, and he could have still been here. He was a good coach, he stood for the right things, but he was too loyal to some of his assistants. Still, I can't say enough good things about Randy Ayers.

We hired Randy over men like Nolan Richardson, who I thought would get the Ohio State job after Gary left. I thought at the time that the job was Nolan's. Nolan had been gaining national recognition at Arkansas. He wanted this job, and as I look back at it now, Nolan would have fit. I first saw Nolan at a basketball game out at Drake University, when I was there getting the Double D Award. I looked over and saw this guy in this Ban-Lon shirt, and these big arms, running up and down the sideline, and I liked his style. I liked the way his athletes played hard. As Nolan said, it was forty minutes of hell; so I wrote down in the book in my pocket, "Nolan Richardson is a whale of a coach."

When the job came open, I got in touch with Nolan, and several of us interviewed him at the Kansas City Hilton. I was impressed. I knew he was ready for the Buckeyes; but I did not know if Columbus, Ohio, was ready for Nolan Richardson. It was not that he was black. That was not a problem. But this was 1989, twenty-three years ago, and Nolan was going to do some innovative things, like open up the gym so they could play basketball twenty-four hours, some things like that. He was a very demonstrative coach on the

sidelines. What does not raise an eyebrow today, well, back then maybe some of these things might have in Columbus, Ohio. In any case, Nolan did not get the job and Ohio State hired Randy Ayers from within. Nolan stayed at Arkansas and it worked for him. During 1990–95, he took the Razorbacks to the NCAA Final Four three times, winning one national championship and losing in the finals a second time. Is that what Nolan Richardson would have brought to Columbus, had Ohio State hired him? We will never know.

Alone in Madison: In 1992, I had been an associate athletic director for seven years, but I was not the only accomplished Myles boy. Brother Phil had a law degree, and my other brother John had become highly successful in the musical world, first playing for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson in the military, and then arranging and playing keyboard for the Fifth Dimension, Lena Horne, Billy Eckstine, and other renowned musicians.

But John had also become ill with an infection while he was in the military, and had been at Walter Reed Medical Center several times. One time, when the Fifth Dimension came to Columbus to play, John sat all day in my living room. I didn't know how he was going to be able to perform, he felt so bad. However, he marshaled his strength, and on stage that night you would have never known anything was wrong. He told me he had just come here to perform for me, his brother, and summoned all his strength for that night's performance.

In 1992, John was again sick. Because of his beliefs, he had stopped taking his medicine. I went to California to see him several times, the last time the last week of September of that year. The next week, after I returned, I traveled with the team to Madison for the OSU game with the Wisconsin Badgers. On October 1, 1992, I had dinner that evening with Butch Carter, older brother of our Cris Carter and then the coach of the NBA Milwaukee Bucks. I had recruited Butch out of Middletown, Ohio, for Nebraska, but he ended up playing basketball for Bobby Knight. Even so, we remained close and in touch, and Butch came to the team hotel in Madison to have dinner with me. Although it was early fall, there was a surprise snowstorm that night. As we ate, the roads became slick and icy. I asked Butch to call me and let me know when he had arrived home safely. Butch did, and when he called, he said, "Coach, I'm home okay. How are you doing?"

"Well, Butch," I told him, "when I got back to my room, they called from California and said 'John just passed.'" That was how I found out that at age fifty-two, my talented brother had passed. I was alone in a hotel room in Madison, Wisconsin.

Butch said, "Coach, I'm on my way back. Right now."

He was going to turn around and drive back to Madison in those snowy conditions. But I told him, "No, Butch, you don't need to come back, I'll be okay."

John left a wonderful wife, Gloria, and a son, Kurt. In the years before and since, Gloria has always been a close member of our family. Even though she lives in California, we still see her often. She and Lorita visit and travel together. For Lorita, and me, Gloria has been the sister neither of us ever had,

the Aunt whom Debbie and Billy trust and love, and a gift from John that keeps on giving.

Stadiums! Another thing I inherited when I became associate athletic director was the Horseshoe. At one time, Ohio Stadium operations reported to me. The Horseshoe is a beautiful place. Howard Dwight Smith, Lynn St. John, Thomas French, Chic Harley—let's just say they bequeathed us a work of art. It is a cathedral. The people who work there call that cathedral "Ohio Stadium." They don't go for that nickname, the 'Shoe.

Mike Dolan, the former manager, spent a majority of his life there. He had been a groundskeeper in Cincinnati for the Reds before he came here. Mike did many things to make Ohio Stadium what it is today. I dealt with Mike, Don Patko, and the other people in the Stadium crew, first as a coach and then as an associate AD. It became a thing with me to get along well with them. I knew how important they were. Back coaching high school in Kansas City, the guy who cut the grass and lined the field used to drink a bit. I would give him a little something. "It's in my back pocket," I would tell him. I could always get the field lined when I needed it, and he would open the gates to let me practice on the grass, when other people couldn't get in. I learned to do those things in high school, and I worked with Mike Dolan that same way. Well, in a similar way might be the better way to say it. I sure didn't go see Mike with a flask in my back pocket! I did keep him informed, though, and let him know we were going to come over at a certain time, checked the rain forecast, etc. so he knew in advance what was needed to accommodate us. It was just common sense and courtesy, but I am amazed at how many people have never learned those traits.

Ohio Stadium is the engine that drives the entire athletic program, and the workers there have a pride in that stadium that is unbelievable. To them, it is The Stadium. If our football players say the 'Shoe, that doesn't bother them so much. But when some donkey away from here comes in and talks about the 'Shoe, well, he doesn't know the history, the tradition. He wasn't at the Snow Bowl. He didn't experience the Illinois game where Keith Byars ran for five touchdowns. He hasn't seen the six Heismans, Script Ohio, the Ramp Entrance, the Drum Major doing that back bend, or the raising of our American flag. He hasn't sung *Carmen Ohio* with our team after the game. He hasn't seen anything that has happened in Ohio Stadium, but he's going to call it the 'Shoe. It is a little disrespectful. You never will hear Mike Dolan or Don Patko call it that. The guys that work there respect it and call it *The Ohio Stadium*.

I have a book about football games in certain places, and naturally Ohio Stadium is in there. It is a history-making place. When Woody first started here, they practiced out behind it. They dressed in there every single day. I can understand how those older players feel about the name.

You look at the top five or so stadiums in the country—Ohio Stadium, the L.A. Coliseum, Notre Dame Stadium, the Rose Bowl and how it sits there in that valley, and the Big House in that State Up North. This little ole boy from 43rd and Broadway has had the opportunity to be on the sidelines in each one of those. I also think of the Cotton Bowl, of the Naval Academy with

those historic battles depicted on the walls, Nietzsche Stadium at Army, the University of Missouri down in that deep hollow with the five-story-high M, or the University of Colorado that sits there in those beautiful mountains. Of course, you go to Oklahoma and they run those ponies out. Each stadium has its own little thing, but those top four or five, there is just nothing like them. And our Ohio Stadium is right there at the top.

The SEC has some great venues, but none of those goes back as far as Ohio Stadium. They don't have the long tradition we do. And some places have downright bad facilities. Back when we played out at Stanford, we dressed way off. It was like dressing over at our Woody Hayes and then having to walk as far as our Ohio Stadium. They had a little outhouse-looking place for us to go during half time, and then we had to walk back through the crowd to get undressed. The University of Georgia was similar. Down there, the players rode a bus about the distance from the Jesse Owens Stadium over to our stadium, and then the players walked back. I would imagine it took Herschel Walker a long time to get back after a game.

One of the most intimidating places to play was LSU. I was down there with Nebraska, and then with Earle, and both times, they were hollering, "Tiger bait, Tiger bait." Both times we won, but they just kept hollering that. They play at night, and the fans have come on Friday, and they have been drinking and eating all day long. You can imagine how worked up they are. As you come in, they are hollering, "Tiger bait, Tiger bait." When you get into the locker room, there is a wall that has some glass, with some bars in-between, and that tiger is right outside, in that cage. People are agitating him. You are in the dressing room, and all you can hear is him roaring and looking at you the whole time you are in there. And these people are out there continuing to get him mad.

During warm-ups, they tell you that you should leave the field at a certain time, before they bring him out. When they bring that 500-pound tiger out, in that cage on wheels, pulling him around with that tractor, and the cheerleaders running alongside, there are people agitating him, the band is playing, and they are hollering more "Tiger bait, Tiger bait." With Nebraska, we took the kickoff, went down and scored, and then we did not hear that chant. Then they scored, and we heard it again. They never sat down. We heard it the rest of the night. We eventually kicked a field goal to win it, but the rest of the night we heard the Tiger bait chants.

Now, at Colorado, they run out a buffalo. When that buffalo (nicknamed Ralphie) turns that corner at Folsom Field in Boulder, it is something. We were out there in 1985, and John Bozick, our long time equipment manager, was standing on the field. I told Bozick, "John, you better get off that field, because the buffalo is coming."

John is a pretty crusty guy, and he growled, "Shoot, I'll stand up to Ralphie."

Yeah, right. Ralphie turned that corner, the four or five of the handlers running with him peeled off, and he came charging through there. The next thing I knew, Bozick was diving into the stands.

Out there, Colorado had asked Rick if Ralphie could come to Columbus when they came to play in Ohio Stadium the next year. Of course Rick told them no.

The next fall, in '86, they tried to end run Rick and get permission from me. I, too, told them, "Heck no, you can't bring Ralphie here. Our people are down around that field."

"We're going to bring him to Columbus," they insisted. They got mad about it.

"Heck no," I told them. "We're not going to have that buffalo crapping on our field. He doesn't know his way around here," I argued. Out there, he comes out of their dressing room, runs around the field, and goes up a chute the other side. He wouldn't know his way around at our house. I held fast and Ralphie didn't come.

Now, I am aware that some traditions have changed over the years, and maybe some things I witnessed have changed. But in my time, I saw these things and the places I have described. They were something. Even today, many stadiums have gimmicks. Up at Michigan State, they throw a Frisbee to a dog between quarters in Spartan Stadium. But Ohio Stadium, the Horseshoe? Nope. You will never see that! When you have the history, the tradition, the cathedral that we have, well, you just do not need a dog catching a Frisbee! I have been all over, coached in many venues, traveled many places. Still, for Bill Myles, there is no place like home, no place like The Horseshoe, no place like The Ohio Stadium.

Especially, I found out, when you have to give it up. Which leads us to another fork in the road, and the dilemma facing me as spring burst forth in 1994.

Chapter 23

REACHING OUT

Despite a long and rich tradition, there have been only nine athletic directors in the history of The Ohio State University. I have been blessed to work with six. Obviously, I never saw the first, John Richards, or the second, L.W. St. John, who of course was the most famous and held that post for thirty-three years. I did attend the funeral of the third, Dick Larkin. Dick died just as I arrived, and Woody said we needed to go to the funeral. So I went to Schoedinger Funeral Home in Upper Arlington and paid my respects. I have known all the rest!

Ed Weaver followed Dick Larkin, and was the athletic director when I first started coaching. He retired shortly after I came. Hugh Hindman followed Ed. Hugh and I got along well. I would ask Hugh things, since he had coached the tackles here long before me. After Hugh, it was Rick Bay, and I have told you how Rick took me into administration. Jim Jones followed Rick, and Jim took me down another satisfying fork in the road.

Then, suddenly, Jim retired. It surprised me. Jim never talked to me about it and it never came out why. But there were some different ways that the leadership above him wanted to go. There were some things they wanted that were totally against Jim's nature, and against his way of doing things, against his way of not hurting people. Jim was against whatever it was, and he had all those years in, so he just retired. Jim was another guy who had come up under Woody. Like Woody, Jim had things he believed in, and he believed so strongly that he couldn't go that other route they wanted. Jim, like Woody, believed in the kids. If it wasn't for the kids, he thought there wouldn't be any need for the rest of us. Jim Jones never wanted to do anything that hurt the athletes and will be a loyal Buckeye as long as he walks this earth.

After Jim, of course, came Andy Geiger. Andy would pose the biggest adjustment of all for me. Though I had taken forks with both Rick and Jim, Andy presented me first with a sharp curve, and then later a big hill to climb!

I Want to Talk to You: In the spring of '94, while I was at the Penn Relays with the track team, Andy Geiger was named the new athletic director. I got a call that Andy wanted me to come back, and he wanted to see me at the spring game the next day. Of course, when you get a new boss taking over, and you get a call like that, naturally you wonder. So I hurried right back.

They introduced Andy at half-time of the spring game, and then we met and talked. I didn't know that Andy knew me. I knew of him because he had been the athletic director at Stanford and Maryland. But when we talked, Andy remembered me and knew of me. At that point, I was still over football,

and Andy told me that he had in mind some things for me to do. Of course, I was glad to hear that he had some things for me to do and had me in mind. I didn't exactly understand then, though, that he was going to take me away from the athletic teams. Mind you, at that time, I had been over half the sports under Rick Bay and then Jim Jones. As it turned out, Andy's version wasn't the same as Tom Osborne's when he said, "I want to talk to you."

On the contrary, I soon heard through the grapevine that there had been a movement from above to get rid of me, and to clean out a lot of the athletic department. There were many letters of support sent in, more than eighty of them, I think, from both male and female athletes, and from coaches. The letters supported me, and demanded that I should remain in the athletic department. I don't know for sure, but I have been told Jim Lachey organized the campaign. Some of the ex-players had likely been major financial contributors to the athletic department, so that probably helped me survive the house cleaning. Then Andy told me of an outreach program that he wanted me to start.

Andy was the fifth athletic director I worked with. Andy is a very bright man, one of the smartest guys I have known. He was always working crossword puzzles on the plane. Andy is very articulate. He had many ideas, which he was always floating, but Andy didn't do tasks himself. He was the big picture guy who assigned things to others. But he was always coming up with ideas.

Andy had been a crew athlete at Syracuse, and at times he would talk to me about football. He hadn't played himself, but he was bright and he could comprehend, and I think I was able to help Andy understand the game. He would ask me about Cover-2, ask what is this, what is that. He could see that we didn't do this, or we should have done that. He was good.

Andy was very bright, but he did have a short fuse. He could blow up over any little thing, and I think his short fuse got him in trouble on the Maurice Clarett episode. Now, I have to be honest with you. He never blew up at me. I saw him blow up at some other people over what I thought was nothing. The thing I can say about Andy, though, is that he had a plan and he worked his plan. Everywhere he went, he built a lot of buildings. He got us facilities and there are none finer. Of course, Gene has to pay for them. But Andy's got a testimony wherever he has been—that Andy did this, Andy built that. You can see his legacy.

Andy did more than build buildings when he was at Ohio State. Besides the outreach program, Andy started the scholarship program, where we endowed scholarships in the names of people. Andy should be remembered for that. He brought that from other places he had been, and it has been a huge fundraiser. I have explained there is one with my name on it, the Bill Myles Endowed Scholarship, because Joe Lukens donated that in my honor and my name.

In the end, though, Andy is going to be remembered for three things. First, people are going to remember the things built on his watch. Ground was broken for the Schottenstein Center two years after Andy arrived. The first baseball game was played in the new Bill Davis Stadium three years after he came here. And the Jesse Owens facility and the Ohio Stadium renovation

followed, seven years after Andy Geiger took the reins. In addition, our world class McCorkle Aquatic Pavilion was dedicated eight months after Andy stepped down as AD. Andy had a hand in five major arenas we now play in.

Second, Andy Geiger is going to be remembered for the two great coaches he hired, Jim Tressel and Thad Matta, and for the one that he had to fire, Jim O'Brien. That was hard on Andy. Andy didn't get close to the coaches, because he said that sometimes you might have to fire them. But Andy was close to O'Brien because of their Eastern roots, and then Jim broke the rules on him. Andy took that personally and it was very hard on him.

Lastly, Andy Geiger is going to be remembered for Maurice Clarett. Before I get to those things, though, I will explain some things for which Andy might not have been well known.

Outreach: Sometime later, after that talk when Andy had called me home, he told me that he wanted me to start a new program. He explained that it was an outreach program for athletes who were close to graduation to return and finish their degrees. He also explained that I would not be overseeing sports as I had been. I was speechless. After I got over the shock, I gathered myself.

I had been watching all the different sports and going to their games. Even when I was coaching football, I would go see other teams play, which got me in touch with those athletes. Most football coaches did not watch other sports. I did. I had watched women's softball when they were playing over on Woody Hayes Drive. I had been to fencing matches. I had watched wrestling. I watched baseball. I watched many of the different Olympic sports teams. Of course, when I had moved into administration I started doing even more of that. I was pretty close to the people in academics that helped the football team and ran our study table. I knew the football players, as well as players in the other sports, so I had a place to start.

I began the outreach program by writing over 120 individual letters to former athletes about coming back to finish school. One of the things I said was, that if the University is going to do it for some athletes, it should be done for all. We were not willing to say one sport was more important than another, so we would take you whether you were a wrestler, a swimmer, or a soccer player. We would take you whether you were a man or a woman. We did it for all, whether they played football, basketball, or one of the non-revenue sports.

My feeling was that these students made a lot of money for this University. The athletes do not get a dime of that. They are still selling #45 jerseys from Archie Griffin. Archie does not get a dime. The players have paid their way. Look at the amount of #10s walking around after Troy Smith won the Heisman. As you go to the games, you see certain numbers. There are a whole lot of people still wearing #33s to the games. James Laurinaitis is gone, but you still see his name on those jerseys. There are a lot of #27s out there for Eddie George. Clearly all those royalties go into the general student scholarship fund, not the athletic fund. The University has made that commitment. But when you are Clark Kellogg and they sell basketball games out and don't have enough seats, when they have to sell split tickets while you are playing—well, you have paid your way!

People don't realize what it takes to be a major college athlete. One of the ways I try to explain it is using recruiting in football. There is one major college football player for every 100,000 people. There is one person who has the height, the weight, the speed, the talent, the skills, and then the grades to be that player. When I coached, down at the Ohio State sideline, you might have seen 105 athletes; but you do not know how many people our staff had to look at to get those 105 athletes.

I once learned in a class back when I was working on my master's degree that an All-American at a large school would bring between 8,000 and 12,000 people to a game. There are 8,000 people who come to that game to see a Troy Smith. That is why the universities push certain athletes; that is why they try to get so much publicity. If the fans do not know about the star, why should they come? I mean, look back at Vic Janowicz. Look at how many people still talk about Janowicz, how many still talk about Hop Cassidy. Those stars draw people to games. People go to see particular athletes. Sometimes fans don't go to see the Buckeyes; they go to see a particular player.

One night in 2010, there was a man sitting in front of me at a basketball game. He had on a Purdue cap. I asked him, "Where are you from?"

"Dayton," he said.

"And you've got a Purdue hat on?" I kidded him.

He said, "I went to Purdue, but I really came tonight to see Evan Turner." That was why he came, to see Evan Turner. This man came in order to be able to tell his grandkids that he had seen Evan Turner play. Evan did not let him down that night, either. That was the deal. Every school has a few stars it promotes.

About 15-20 of the former players came back to school in response to that first batch of letters I wrote. I established the program and set the rules. We agreed to pay their way if they had a 2.0 GPA. If they did not have a 2.0, we would not pay. If they did not have a 2.0 and went to school, we agreed to make a refund for that quarter and agreed to help them finish as long as they made acceptable grades. I set the sideboards and parameters, and got the program going.

Then after a while, the NCAA said we could not do that. The students had to work for this scholarship. Therefore, we got them jobs in places on campus. They did work. It was not like a normal scholarship with room and board. We were just paying their tuition. If these people were going to school five days a week, they could not hold a regular job. They were giving up income. It was not as if we were feeding their families. In some cases, they were just one more body in a class that would have been there anyway.

The program was more than the money. It was that someone approached them and tried to get them to come back. Football player Ric Volley made it big in an article in *USA Today*. He had been out fifteen years or more, and he was always preaching education at the Boy's Home where he worked. He worked with troubled youth, preaching to them the value of education, when he finally came to me and asked, "How can I do that if I don't have mine?" Ric came back and finished school.

I had some athletes that had been out of school sixteen or seventeen years, and I talked them into coming back and finishing. Some of these

players had played for Woody Hayes when I first got here. Some of these athletes had careers. Some were coaching or working with kids, and getting on kids telling them that you had to have a college degree, yet they did not even have degrees themselves. I got them to come back. Some female athletes came back, and they nearly always finished.

I convinced Clark Kellogg that he should come back and finish, so Clark entered the program. The university and I got into a debate about that. They told me, "Clark Kellogg has all this money. Let him pay his way."

I continued to pay Clark's way. I was stubborn. "We owe Clark Kellogg," I told the university. "When Clark was here, we sold alternate tickets. We sold basketball books for half the season, there was such a demand for tickets. You would have this seat one game, and I would have it the next. When Clark was here, Clark Kellogg filled up St. John Arena. We owe Clark."

"He's got money," they said. "He's a millionaire. He played pro ball and all of that."

"Heck," I told them. "Clark has boosted our program more than anybody. He goes out and makes speeches to alumni groups. He talks about us all the time on TV. Clark Kellogg is still bringing in money for this university. It isn't going to cost you anything to have another body sitting in an empty chair in a classroom."

After a while, they agreed that I was right in what I was doing, but I really caught it at the start. I was right. Steve Davis interviewed Clark Kellogg, who made the following comments about the program:

> Bill Myles has a rich resume and history of helping people, and coaching, and being a model in every way. That history has been a tremendous influence on a lot of folks, including me.
>
> I was in school when Coach Myles was an assistant football coach. I didn't have a lot of interaction with Bill, but every time I did, it was rich and fruitful just visiting with him to talk about life. I recall how steady and consistent Coach Myles was, and caring. When I would stop by the office, Bill was always encouraging, always listening, and offered good, thoughtful insight.
>
> I have had a chance to interact with the football players. Bill's players always came first with him. They revere him. They have tremendous respect for him. I have grown to know him and have seen him as a father, as a family man and teacher, and as a coach who really did put his players first. You never got the sense that it was about him. It was always about his players, the team, the University. He had an attitude of gratitude that was palpable. You could feel it anytime you were in his presence. Now, Bill was tough and no nonsense, but there was great compassion and care for the players under his charge.
>
> That compassion and caring helped me, too. As I was contemplating leaving school after my junior year, one day we had a good conversation that was helpful. I remember being in Bill's office and we talked about the pros and cons. Bill didn't try to sway me one way or the other. It was open. It was honest. As a coach and mentor that he is, he just laid out what to look at. He wanted to challenge me about

finishing school, and he wanted to make sure that was a priority I was going to have. At the same time, if I was ready to go and felt confident, in his mind that decision was going to be my choice.

Bill was instrumental in starting the program for athletes who left school. I was aware of it, but I went over to Indianapolis and was able to get some classwork done there. Ultimately, though, I came back and finished up at Ohio State in Bill's program because I wanted to get my degree as a Buckeye!

I wasn't privy to the lengths Bill had to go to in order to make the outreach program happen for me, but I knew it was fairly novel at the time for former student athletes to have a chance to come back to the university and have their schooling paid for even though they had left. Bill battling to get that done for me fits right with who he is—his conviction and his concern are for the student athletes. I was not surprised to learn that he had to roll up his sleeves and get a little dirty to make that happen.

When I eventually made that walk and got that diploma, it was one of the milestone achievements of my life, to be able to display that I am a college graduate from The Ohio State University. It was just one of the great moments in my life. The night before commencement, I flew back from Los Angles on the red-eye after broadcasting a Pacers game. That was how excited I was about finishing that step. The ceremony was, appropriately, in St. John Arena, and Dr. Gee actually gave me my diploma.

That diploma has opened up tremendous opportunities for me that I don't think I would have had, had I not gotten that degree. I was appointed to the Ohio State University Board of Trustees recently. I have served on the Alumni Association Board. I have spoken at Commencement. I travel to speak at alumni functions. I just don't know if any of that happens without a degree from Ohio State. It opens up doors; it creates a smoother path to opportunities. And it was a fulfillment of one of the dreams Coach Myles had for me.

Bill Myles—Coach, Teacher, Devoted Husband, Devoted Father, and Difference Maker. It's no surprise he had that dream for me. Bill has a rich history with vast experience in unique times. He has been around to see a lot of change, and been right in the middle of that change. He's seen it on a number of levels throughout his life in many different ways, and yet his approach is so simple—be the best you can be wherever you are.

We have had many guys who came back. Clark is just one. We had some guys as far back as the '68 team. Some of them wanted to keep it on the QT. "How can I do this without people knowing?" they asked me.

"I won't tell anybody," I told them, "but I don't know how you are going to keep it quiet. Being who you are, I don't know how you are going to keep it secret. I mean, when you walk in and sit down next to them in that class, they are going to know who you are!" Some would come back and try to do

it at night. One guy quit because he was embarrassed that everybody thought he had already graduated. He was embarrassed about it.

I am proud that I developed this program. At the time, it was unique in the country. *USA Today* ran stories on it. They interviewed me and we had some of our bigger name guys on their sports page. I had thirty or thirty-one finish their degrees and graduate from the program.

Then, all of a sudden, the people who ran our study table wanted it. Athletic academics didn't want it at first, when I was doing the heavy lifting to get it off the ground. But after I had built it up and it started getting national recognition, they wanted it. I fought to keep it for a couple of years, but then they took it. Andy told me to give it to them, but I was stubborn. I didn't for maybe five or six months. Then he told me again, and I didn't really do it that time, either. Finally, Andy told me, "I'm giving you two weeks to do it."

"It'll be done," I told Andy. I later went back to Andy and told him that I had taken all the materials over there to the other folks. I also told Andy, "But I don't like it! Nobody wanted this program at first, and you gave it to me. I didn't really want it. But I had the attitude that anything you gave me, I was going to make it a 'going Jesse.' Now that I have made this a going Jesse and we are getting this publicity, now they want it and say they should have it. Well, if that's the case, then it should have come out of there in the beginning."

"I understand where you are coming from, but it does belong over there," Andy said. "You did a great job on it, but it belongs over there."

I told him that I just wanted him to know how I felt about it. I worked hard on that, to get it where it was, and then, when it was there and getting publicity, they wanted to take it. It wasn't the publicity that bothered me—I thought it should have been there from the first—but they gave it to me, and anything they gave me, I tried to make something of it. I wanted Andy Geiger to know how strongly I felt about that, and I told him so.

Back in Heaven: After they took the outreach program away, Andy gave me some sports again. I was back in heaven, back at the only thing I ever wanted to do. Football! I was working with John Cooper as director of football operations. I would meet with John, find out what he needed, be at his practices, and set up all the trips, arrange the planes, work out his budget, all the things that Bob Tucker later did for Coach Tressel. That was how I was in a position to know John and what he did. My job was mostly football operations, but I told Andy I wanted to keep my title of associate athletic director. I kept that, and you'll learn soon why it was a good thing I did.

But in the fall of 1998, it was football operations! That is what I was doing when John Cooper had one of his finest teams. The team finished that season with a win over Michigan. What should have been a joyous celebration of that victory, however, would turn instead into the most serious and dangerous time of my life.

Chapter 24

LITTLE VICTORIES, DADDY, LITTLE VICTORIES

On November 21, 1998, Michigan came to Ohio Stadium. It was my birthday, and what a present I got when we thumped the Wolverines, 31-16. It was one of John Cooper's finest seasons, a record of 11-1 and a tie with Wisconsin and Michigan for the Big Ten championship. At the end of the game, the fans rushed the field. Ohio State historian Jack Park would rank that team amongst the top five or six finest the Buckeyes have ever assembled. The only defeat was by four points, a shocking forth quarter loss to underdog Michigan State. Of course, that loss kept us from going to the Rose Bowl that year, or more likely, playing Tennessee in the first-ever BCS National Championship game.

Instead, in thirty-nine days Ohio State would go to the Sugar Bowl and beat Texas A&M to finish ranked number two in the nation. I was the associate athletic director in charge of football, but that number two finish by the coach I helped hire would be the first bowl game I missed in the twenty-one years I had been at The Ohio State University.

The fans had rushed the field after the Buckeye win, and I had to push people around just to get to the locker room from the sidelines. Lorita and I got home that Saturday evening, and we had some guests. People often came by the house after the games, and that night we celebrated one of Cooper's victories over Michigan. While there were still people at the house, I mentioned to Lorita, "I feel tired and I'm going up to bed." That was unusual. I felt tired all that next week, but I attributed it to the excitement of Michigan.

The following Thursday was Thanksgiving, and we celebrated at home. I would like to tell you what happened that night, but the truth is I can't remember. Instead, Lorita will describe what happened:

> It was Thanksgiving of 1998. My mother was here. The children were home. We had just finished a big family dinner. All our marriage, Bill always helped me with the dishes. When we finished cleaning up, I said to Bill, "Baby, I'm going up, I'm tired."
>
> Bill said to me, "I've been tired all week."
>
> As Bill wrote above, the weekend before at the Ohio State-Michigan game, he was pushing people out of the way, and he thought that was the reason he was tired. We went up to bed. Soon Bill got up and regurgitated. When Bill did that, it vibrated throughout the house. He did that twice, and we thought he had the flu. First, he was hot, and

I got a cold towel. Then his legs ached so I asked Bill if he wanted me to rub his legs.

He replied, "I don't care what you do." So I rubbed his legs, which later turned out to be a key thing, because when I did, he told me, "That hurts, don't rub my legs."

The third time he threw up it went into his lungs. I cried out, "Billy, Billy," but he didn't respond. I was shaking him but he just would not respond, so I ran downstairs where Billy Jr. was sleeping and screamed, "I'm calling the emergency squad." I flicked the porch light on and called them. After I hung up, I realized that in my panic I hadn't given them our address. I called back again!

"We picked it up from your phone call," they assured me. "We're on our way, just turn the lights on."

When the squad got here, one guy saw our pictures on our wall and said, "It's a brother." After they got upstairs and saw how big Bill was, and saw him comatose, they were concerned he might wake up while they were carrying him down on the stretcher. They went and got a chair and strapped him in and carried this 240-pound man, in a coma, down the stairs strapped on that chair. I have nothing but praises for what those EMS responders and firemen did for our family that holiday night.

I rode with them to Riverside Hospital and Billy followed us. In the meantime, my sister-in-law Gloria called, and my daughter-in-law Janet told her, "Oh, Aunt Gloria, Dad is really sick."

"Tell Lorita not to worry, I'll be there tomorrow," Gloria said without hesitation, even though she was in California as they were speaking.

At the hospital, I sat outside the emergency room as they worked on Bill. They came out to get all the information I could give them, but I forgot to tell them about his legs hurting. When Billy got there, he asked the doctor how sick his dad was. "We don't think he is going to make it," they told him. Billy didn't tell me that. He didn't tell his wife that. He just headed back home and got his sister.

By the time they got back, they had moved Bill upstairs to the ICU. People told us that was one time it paid for people to know who you are, to know you are an Ohio State football coach.

I stayed all that night. They kept trying to tell me that I needed to go home. "No," I said, "I have been married to this wonderful man for forty-one years and I'm not leaving him tonight." I was back in the corner and they just kept rushing in and out. First, it was something with his heart. Then his sugar went up. This went on that night and all day the next day. Around two or three the next morning, the nurse came to me and said, "You need to call your children."

"Why?"

"We have maxed out on the medication and his blood pressure continues to drop."

I called Billy to come, and he went to get Debbie. Then I called

my pastor's home and woke Pastor Billingslea and his wife Miss Ellie from their sleep. "Pastor," I told him, "They say my husband is dying."

"I'll be right there," I remember Pastor Billingslea saying. And then Miss Ellie told him, "That child has never in her life called for anything. I'm coming, too."

By this time, Debbie was there and constantly talking to her dad. She was giving Bill his own medicine, giving him his "Little Victories" speech. She gave him the same speech he had used with so many of his players so very many times in his life. "Daddy, remember Little Victories, you got to have some Little Victories right now, Daddy. Little Victories." Debbie believed the sound was the last to go, and she was pleading with him, doing the only thing she knew to try to keep him with us.

Soon Pastor Billingslea and his wife arrived. Miss Ellie had been a nurse, and when she came in, she counted thirteen things hooked up to Bill's body. They had him hooked up to this new machine at the time, one that they told us came out of the space program. It was hooked up to parts of his heart and they could see the pressure in it. They could tell where it was ten minutes ago, what was happening right now, everything.

I could see the pressure on that apparatus as [Pastor] Billingslea started praying. I get emotional still when I think of it. It was in the danger zone. I didn't have the faith to pray with my eyes closed. I was afraid I would shut my eyes and Bill would leave me. So I was watching that mechanism as we all prayed. During the prayer, I saw his pressure start to go up. One digit at first. Another digit. Then another. As we stood there praying, my wide-open eyes watched it come up one agonizing digit at a time, to bring him out of that danger area.

Yet Bill was still comatose, swollen with water. Debbie had worked at the hospital, and she knew the top specialist. Saturday night he came in to take something from Bill's spine. Then they came back later and brought in another specialist.

That Sunday Bill was still comatose. It had been two-and-a-half days, but the doctor from the university told me that they had stabilized him. Bill had been around Markus, our eleven-month-old grandbaby, all that Thanksgiving Day. I told them, "We've got this million dollar baby at home, and I have to know what's going on." Finally, the doctor on duty came in to tell me they had gotten the results of the spinal sample. "He's got meningitis," she said.

The doctor told me what pills to get, and I called Billy. "You take our baby home," I said. "Tell your doctor this is what it is, and this is the medicine they say you need to give Markus immediately." Their pediatrician called in a prescription right away. All of us who had been around Bill—Debbie, Billy, Janet, my mother—we all got a prescription we had to take.

Once they got the diagnosis, they knew the medication to give him. They started treatment, and I asked the doctor, "What is this going to do to his body?"

"We don't know yet," she told me. "Yes, there can be some residual effects."

I had been there five straight days and nights, only running out briefly to shower. On Tuesday night, I finally went home for the first time. When I came back the next morning, Bill was out of the coma. As I walked in, he said, "Thank you very much!" Bill thought it was nice of us finally to show up!

Bill had had these dreams. He thought he was in a room and that all these shoeboxes had fallen on him, and the team physician had gotten him out from under those shoeboxes! Several days later, he asked me, "Lorita, why did you buy a new house?" He had dreamt that I had bought a new house and that each room in the house was named after one of the books of the Bible. He told us about seeing Psalms and the Jeremiahs in these rooms. There was Genesis and Exodus. It was so vivid to him that we had a hard time convincing him that the shoeboxes hadn't fallen on him, that I had not bought a new house, and there weren't rooms for the books of the Bible.

Bill was in intensive care for more than a week. Even though he was out of it, he could still intimidate the nurses! They had tied down his hands and he convinced one nurse to untie him. When she came back, he had pulled everything out! He was going to go home. He kept saying, "Let's get the heck out of Dodge."

Finally, Debbie got right in his face and told him, "Daddy, you almost died! You cannot leave!"

Later on, Bill's Kansas City roots surfaced when he told my sister-in-law Gloria, "Debbie is Boss Tweed!"

Bill had to learn to walk again. Today he walks four miles every morning at the Woody Hayes Center. Then he couldn't take one single step. He was in the hospital from Thanksgiving Night until two days before Christmas, when they let him go home. There is a line in an old Christmas song that goes, "The greatest Christmas present is one that you don't buy." That was our family the Christmas of 1998.

The hardest part was holding him down for his recovery. I remember the OSU band director wanted him to speak to the band. Debbie drove him over to the band room. "Debbie," I told her, "Don't let him stay but a short time."

Well, when they got over there, Debbie told Bill, "Mama said you're only supposed to stay this long."

"Your Mama's not here!" was Bill's retort.

Months later, when he bucked, I asked him, "Bill, as sick as you were, why would you do these things?"

"Lorita," he said to me, "I don't remember it. I don't remember any of it."

I really think it made a difference that I stayed right there with Bill. Early on, one of the staff—a girlfriend of one of the Ohio State football players—gave me a spiral notebook and said, "Start recording." I did. It has been sixteen years, and I still have that notebook. I wrote down everything. Once I began recording, I remembered about the leg pain

and told the doctor. He said, "You didn't tell me about that." Later, when I read up on Bill's illness, I discovered that pain in the legs is an indicator of meningitis.

Bill made a complete recovery. The doctors told us that if he hadn't been a strong man, hadn't been doing several hundred push-ups and sit-ups daily, he wouldn't have made it. But we also know that we had prayers going from one end of this country to the other, prayers by all the people that Bill had once touched in his life. There were three meningitis cases in Columbus at that time, and sadly, my husband was the only one of them we knew survived.

I remember very little of what Lorita just told you. I remember Bill Willis coming to sit with me at night. I remember Lorita staying nights. And I remember all those dreams. But those are the few things I remember.

When I got out of the hospital, I had lost almost forty pounds. They started me in a rehab program. I had to learn to walk again. I had been doing hundreds of push-ups every morning, and then I couldn't do two! It started slow, but it gradually got better. It was tough, but I fell back on that old theory about lifting a calf over the fence, one of Woody's lectures he used to give. The old coach had been gone for nearly twelve years, but there he was still teaching me. "To get strong," Woody used to say, "you don't go out and lift a cow over a fence the first day. You go out and lift a baby calf over the fence. And every day after, you lift this same calf over that fence, until eventually you're lifting a cow over the fence."

I had followed that routine ever since I was a little boy. I wanted to do ten push-ups. Then I wanted to do twelve. Then it was fifteen. Right before this illness, at age sixty-two, I was doing eight sets of a hundred and fifty push-ups. Thanks to the calf approach, today, fourteen years later, I am back to where I was. I have lab numbers doctors can't believe. Every weekday morning at 5:15 a.m., I am working out in the Woody Hayes Center. It used to be me, Debbie, and Coach Tressel. Then it was Coach Fickell. Now it is Coach Meyer. A while back, I was down at the Woody Hayes and decided I wanted to do some chin-ups. I couldn't do any, so I looked in a book. It said a guy my age should be able to do two chins. "Okay," I said, "I'm going to do ten." I made ten. Now I'm at twenty.

Of course, it is not just twenty. It is now ten sets of twenty. At 5:15 a.m. I do twenty chins; at 5:18, I do twenty more; and so on until a half hour later, I have completed ten sets of twenty, or two hundred chin-ups! If I set my mind to do something, I am going to do it. Why, I go down to the weight room where the football players are, and I see there are some that can't do five. Eric Lichter, our former strength coach, teased the football players. "Here's the old man, and at age seventy-six he can do more than you can," he would tell them.

People ask me how this experience changed my life. With my mother being a Christian Science practitioner, I never took medicine. I just always thought I was healthy. I do a lot of healthy things. I never smoked. I never drank. I wasn't a partier. I have a lot of things in life I believe in, and one of them is nothing good happens after 11:00 at night!

You might think the thought that I could have checked out would have been life changing, that all of a sudden I discovered what was important in life. But the fact is, I didn't see that. I had always tried to have my priorities in life right. Then, too, I didn't see myself as bad as Lorita and the kids saw me. I was out. They tell me things that had happened, but of course I was in a coma. I didn't see all that. I wasn't in the room when they thought the Lord was taking me. And there is the Christian Science part of me where you are always looking at everything being perfect. God made it, and so it is perfect. And God still had more left for Bill Myles to do that frightening night of November 26, 1998. It wasn't my time *to leave this Place.*

Chapter 25

TRESSEL BALL

I spent the first part of 1999 recovering from meningitis. I wasn't the only one that had taken a turn for the worse. After going 11-1 in '98, and being four points from playing for a national championship, John Cooper finished 1999 with a 6-6 record and a tie for eighth place in the Big Ten. For the first time in ten years, Ohio State didn't go to a bowl game. It was the beginning of the end for John Cooper.

Things didn't get much better in 2000 for the Buckeyes, as Ohio State finished 5-3 and fourth place in the Big Ten. Then we lost the January 1, 2001 Outback Bowl to South Carolina. Andy fired John following that bowl game. He immediately began a search for a new coach, which of course culminated with the hiring of Jim Tressel.

I never coached under Coach Tressel, but I was on the staff with him under Coach Bruce. Following my retirement, I would see him at 5 a.m. every morning as I worked out in the Woody Hayes Center. Jim Tressel is a good teacher of techniques, and good at teaching you the qualities of life—how to be a man and those kinds of things.

Jim is serious. I don't think he ever wanted to be anything in life other than a football coach. Of course, his father was a coach, his two brothers are coaches, so it is in the family blood. I think in the back of Jim's mind, his goal was always to coach at Ohio State. I think Jim's father Lee wanted that job, and I think Jim thought he earned it for the family. Jim likes people, and people who coach have to like people. Jim saw things in light of helping an athlete be a better person, a good citizen, rather than just being a better football player. I have seen it first hand and it isn't an act. It is genuine. You could see back when we were on the staff together that he worked hard at the game. He didn't play golf, which I could relate to. Jim was always very interested in what the other assistants were thinking. He just worked hard at being a coach.

Jim and Woody were night and day different, yet in some ways they were both so similar. They shared a love for Ohio State, a love for football, a love for forming the athlete into a rounded citizen. Certainly, they would go about it in different ways, but both just wanted to help that young man become the best person he could be.

I found Coach Hayes and Coach Tressel both very forgiving people. Of course, Woody would jump all over you and then after he blew his stack, say, "All right, how can we solve this?" I saw Woody blow his stack when he would get bad news, and then just like that, he would turn a 360 and ask, "All right, how can we help this boy?"

Jim is so different in his style. Jim never wants you to see him ruffled. But

all the time he is thinking while he is listening to your problem. He is cutting out all the unnecessary stuff, asking, "How can we solve this?" Tress, I think, believes you catch more flies with honey than you do with a swatter. Woody gave you that swatter first, then he brought on the honey.

All guys that become a head coach at a place like Nebraska or Ohio State—Woody, Tressel, Bruce, Cooper, Osborne, Devaney—they all learned that you are only as good as your last game. Don't get too excited. Don't get too down. What goes around comes around. I am sure that quiet steadiness helped carry Coach Tressel through his adversity.

When I was coaching at Ohio State, we would win games, but the next game would always be "the biggest game in the world" to our fans. We lost three in a row in the Stadium once with Earle, and that was the most Ohio State had ever lost then—three in a row in Ohio Stadium. We were going over to Illinois, and everybody thought if we could just beat Illinois, it would be the greatest thing. Well, we did. We whipped them soundly. After we won, well, it turned out it wasn't that big of a game. But the next game was big. We won that one, too, and same thing. Then Wisconsin was coming in and that was the big one. In the fans' eyes, you never really win a big one. It is only a big one when you lose it! You are only as good as your last win. Coach Tressel found that out, too, like all the others.

One Step Closer: I give a speech some have titled "One Step Closer." I have given it many times, but one of the most memorable was to Coach Tressel's team up in Youngstown. Jim wrote about it in one of his books. After Tress and I coached on Earle's staff together, when Jim was at Youngstown, he asked me to come and talk to his team. I said sure and went up there to do that speech for him.

That day in Youngstown, I got in the middle and used all the points I knew he would have covered during the week, points I would have covered with my players. "Are you ready? Can you work for three hours? This is going to be a tough game. You haven't beaten these guys in seven or eight years. Are you willing to play for three hours?

"*If so, take one step closer.*

"There is nothing you are going to do in your life that is as hard as playing football. For three hours, you're never going to work this hard again in your life. Can you give me three hours?

"*If so, take one step closer.*

"You know what I want you to do on that very first play? Come off that line as hard as you can, and hit that guy with your helmet right under his chin. As tough as you can. Let him know, 'I'm going to be here for three hours. I don't know about you, but I'm going to be here for three hours. Are you going to be here? I am. And for three hours.' Can you show him you're going to give him three hours?

"*If so, take one step closer.*

"Will you take little pieces of the guy across from you? This game's going to last three hours, so will you take little pieces of him every play? When the play's going away, will you go across him and hit him on the knee with your

helmet? Next play will you hit him in the shoulder with your helmet? Next play will you hit him on the wrist? Will you do that for me?

"If you will, take one step closer.

"By the fourth quarter, that swim that he has been doing which started coming way up here, by the fourth quarter it's going to be way down low. Will you give more in the fourth quarter than he will? Do you believe that in the fourth quarter, you will have him?

"If you do, take one step closer."

When I finished that speech, I knew I had Coach's team. But I didn't know that day how much that speech would mean to Youngstown State, or later to the Buckeyes, until Coach Tressel recently told his version of that same story. Here's what Jim said about that speech and how he came to ask me to give it:

> I was once asked, "What could a young person learn from Bill Myles?" Bill Myles has a very solid foundation of what he believes in, a very solid faith, a very solid confidence in what's right. Bill is highly organized. If you think about a young person getting ready to tackle whatever they are going to tackle, I'm a believer, and Bill is, too, that you can't do that alone. If you think that you are going to be able to handle everything by yourself, without something bigger than you, you're in trouble.
>
> Bill Myles always had that something—it being his faith—which always was going to supersede any of his personal feelings, any of his hardships, any of his struggles, any of his excuses. He always had that faith which formed him to handle what had been, and what will be. Bill is not a guy who is very distracted, and what I notice now with young people is, one of the biggest challenges that they have in this crazy world we live in, is that they are highly distracted. There aren't many days where they sit under a tree and read a book. That's not the world they live in. But Bill had that ability to always step back from whatever the moment was, assess it versus what he believed, and then proceed. Therefore, he could handle the ups and downs, maybe the unfair situations versus advantages that someone else might have had.
>
> I learned a lot when I was in the same office with Bill in St. John Arena. When I would bring my players in, we would be there X'ing and O'ing. I was type A and we would be going at it on the chalkboard. But when ole Bill would bring his players in, he would be over there talking life's lessons. And you know what? His guys played well! I learned a lot after about three years of observing that. I can't tell you how many Bill Myles-isms I shared with my players at Youngstown, and then at Ohio State. Bill was a wise person, and I share things today that I probably don't even remember that I got from him.
>
> All that led to Bill playing an instrumental part in my success in life. We had been at Youngstown State short of one year, and in the midst of our first year, we knew what we had in place. We knew our goals. We knew we weren't great but we knew we were getting better. We just needed a little proof. We needed a little something to validate that we were heading in the right direction. That's hard, when you are

1-9, as we were at that time. In this age, it is hard for anyone outside of the people sitting in that room to consider any progress was going on, especially since the year before Youngstown had been, I think, 5-6.

As I was thinking about our Youngstown-Akron game, which was Youngstown's Ohio State-Michigan game back in those days, I thought, "How could I help our players understand how much fun a rivalry could be, and also help them to believe that they are progressing, even though everyone around them says they aren't?" Immediately, I thought of that steadiness, that solid foundation, that one foot in front of the other aura that Bill Myles always embodied. "I wonder if Bill would be willing to come and visit with our guys?" I thought. So I paid Bill a call, and asked him to make that three-hour drive to Youngstown and talk with the team. I didn't even give him a topic. I knew Bill. I knew what he believed in. I knew he had lived the Nebraska-Oklahoma rivalry when it was at its highest. I knew he had lived the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry in its great years. I knew that whatever he shared would be what we needed.

After you've been through ten weeks of a losing season, and you've been trying to teach lessons, the laser-locked posture from a player is waning a bit because it didn't bear any results. But when Bill started talking with our guys in that locker room, *immediately* they were glued in. That bellowing voice, that resume; he had their attention. With his extraordinary voice, he did a great job of inflecting, knew when to be forceful, and when to get them to lean forward, and then to ask them to come "one step closer" at the appropriate times in that speech.

I didn't know at that moment that we would go out and beat a team that was better than we were. But I knew we would go out and do the best we could, which is all you can ever do. Some games you sit around Friday, saying, "Whew, I'm not sure we are ready to be at our best. I just don't feel it." But after Bill visited with our guys, I felt it. I felt if nothing else, we were going to play our best. When he finished, Bill just got back in his car, headed back to Columbus, and didn't even take part in all the joy of the game that we were about to play.

We ended up beating Akron that day, decisively, by a score of 40 to 39! I have a photo of me being carried off the field that day, and we were 2-9! In fact, it's the only time I've ever been carried off the field, and it happened to be after win number two in my first season at Youngstown State. That was such a validation of the eleven months we had just spent together. It was a validation of "Hey, we're going to go somewhere."

I attribute it to a lot of hard work by our coaches and players, but also to the right man saying the right things at the right time. And I go back to my first point about "why did Bill have a good plan?" It's because it's grounded in the right things. It was not someone coming in and trying to trick them into thinking something, or to get them to go out there and kill them. It wasn't someone delivering a dead fish to the locker room saying, "See what the opponents sent us." *It was real.* What Bill Myles gave them that day *was real.* At the end of that *One*

Step Closer speech, they were so tight. They were packed. They were just packed together. You could just feel it. And I think it was because it was genuine. It was because they knew he believed every word he said. And it paralleled what they had been told the last eleven months.

That win was a huge day for us. We've said it many times. I'm not sure we would have made it at Youngstown if it weren't for that day. It was one of those breakthrough moments. I'll go to my grave remembering, yeah, the guys who made the plays, but also Bill Myles being the guy we needed for that moment.

I thought I was just going up there to speak, but after my talk Coach put an envelope in the folder that I had my speech in. For some reason, I did not open the envelope. Four or five years later, I was cleaning out the garage at home, and I found the folder with that envelope. When I found it, it had Youngstown State Football on the return address. I felt it. I opened it. And there was this honorarium for my expenses! I thought, "Tressel probably thinks, *'I gave Bill this honorarium and he never even thanked me.'* " I hadn't thanked him for it because I almost threw it away. It lay in my garage for four or five years! I went up there just to do him a favor. I didn't expect anything, and he just said bye when I left, and I find out years later that he had given me this honorarium. I mean it wasn't huge, but it was a nice little sum. If I hadn't been cleaning out the garage, it might still be out there. Guess it is another thing I learned from Woody—how to stash the money people give you for speaking.

When I found the cash, I knew it was for my expenses. Then later I was laughing, wondering if maybe Jim was thinking, "*Well, I owe Bill this for him letting me point out his guys' mistakes in front of Earle during all those film sessions.*" Of course, when I decided to tell this, I knew Jim would read it. So I went over to the Woody Hayes and fessed up to what happened, and I belatedly thanked Coach Tressel.

On the Move: When Jim was first with me on Earle's staff, you could see he was on the move. He would ask many things about line play. He was talking to the defensive coaches, soaking it all up. His father was a highly respected coach. Jim played quarterback in college. He had been an assistant at Akron. Jim knew football. But all that didn't make him a great coach. His work ethic is what made him a great coach. His work ethic is unbelievable. He is always doing something with football. I don't think he has many outside interests, other than his family and religion. Jim is a very avid reader of books and philosophies, but otherwise Jim was all football, all the time.

You knew that if Jim ever got the chance, he was going to come to Ohio State. Jim would call me and ask me about things at times, ask me things about our situation. He came to Columbus, and made himself visible in the athletic department. When the job did open up, Jim was prepared to make a run at it.

I remember January 17, 2001 like yesterday. That day it was leaked that Jim would be the next coach. Of course, when word hit the airwaves, the name Jim Tressel wasn't even out of the WTVN announcer's lips when the

switchboards began to light up with people panning the hire. Ohio State could have hit a home run, the reasoning went, and instead they had hired a no-name. To hear the callers, there were any number of big names who could or should have gotten the job: Walt Harris, Jon Gruden, Glen Mason, Bob Stoops, even Chris Spielman, to name a few. But Ohio State hired a rookie in the eyes of some fans.

The next day, Andy Geiger went to Youngstown to pick Coach Tressel up for the formal announcement. When they got back to Don Scott airport, Andy called me. It had already been arranged that I would get the team together. Andy called while the team was working out, and I called them together in the meeting room. I introduced Jim. Then I told the team I had worked with him, told them that he was going to do a superior job. Of course, some of the guys thought it was wrong that John Cooper was let go. Players think that way. Coop had brought them here and now he was gone. Jim was going to have to build some trust with his new team. I tried to help break the ice, to help Jim get off on the right foot with his players.

Jim thanked me, and told some stories about things we had done together and then gave his talk to the team. We left, and I took him over to the football recruiting room in the stadium, where he was introduced during the press conference that was broadcast live.

Jim didn't let me down. I told the players that day that Jim Tressel was going to do a superior job. He did. Jim Tressel's record at Ohio State was 106 wins and 22 losses, a .828 winning percentage, before Ohio State vacated the 2010 season. There were seven Big Ten titles, twenty-four first-team All-Americans. They played for three national championships and won one. And of course, there is the big one, a 9-1 record against that School Up North! Do you think anyone would have believed me, that day in January, if I had introduced Jim Tressel with, "Here's the guy who will beat Michigan for you, nine out of the next ten years, the guy who will have a seven-year run against the School Up North." I would have been laughed off the podium and out of Columbus. But that is what Coach Tressel did. I don't think we will see another 8-0 streak again in my lifetime, or yours! That is how big that is! And each year that he coached, he had the most Academic All-Big Ten selections of any team in the conference.

Jim's nickname is "The Senator" because he is so diplomatic. I just look on it as being shrewd or astute. From the very first day, he embraced the rivalry. Much was made of him bringing down the house with his Michigan comments at that basketball game in the Schottenstein Center. It is often repeated that he "guaranteed a win over Michigan." That is a funny thing. What Coach really said that day was, "I can assure you that you'll be proud of our young people—in the classroom, in the community, and especially in 310 days in Ann Arbor." That is a fine line from guaranteeing a win, even though it has become an urban legend that he did that.

What Coach Tressel did do that day was give us, in twenty-six words, the Tressel mantra. "Proud of our young people—in the classroom, in the community, and on the field." We might not always win, but we are always going to try to give you our best and do it with class. We are always going to try to do the right thing. And he, his program, and his teams have done that. In the

instances where they have not, it's not because of Jim; it is because some kids still in their teens have let him down.

I wrote that passage above long before Jim ran into difficulty and resigned. I have been asked if I wanted to change it. But I still believe those words to this very day. In these times, there are always cynics who don't believe that about any high-profile person. Because so many high-profile people have had failings, our culture and our media tend to tag them all that way. But what you see is what you get with Jim Tressel. He is his own guy, and he lives by the values he teaches, the same way I have tried to live my life. Jim was embraced by most for those values, for what he did, for what he accomplished, and how he's gone about it.

Today there is no way any coach can please everybody. He doesn't throw enough, and then he throws too much. He is a hero when things go well, the goat when they don't. The electronic age has made us a people who constantly need to be entertained. It is not enough just to win any more. You need style points. You can see it in the stadium now, with that new ribbon screen and that big scoreboard that are continuously flashing something new and distracting from the game on the field. On Monday morning, the armchair quarterbacks judge what happened Saturday by the ESPN highlight reel. And the explosion of the electronic media now means that it is not enough for a sports writer just to report the game. What yesterday was news is today everywhere. Anybody can do it, regardless of skills or objectivity. To compete, they all have to put opinion out there, manufacture controversy, and amplify tidbits that were formerly trivia, formerly private. These things now bounce across the Internet like a pinball in the old arcade machines, drowning out measured understanding and wisdom that comes from insight.

Even the best coach today is going to be splashed by some of that, stung by that criticism. The good ones learn to shrug it off, and Coach Tressel was good at that. But that doesn't make that criticism right, doesn't mean it still doesn't sting. I want to say to every one of those critics of the Coach, "*Look at the good the man has done.*" A raised academic profile. Extraordinary community involvement. A national championship. And nine of ten wins over Michigan. That is the measure of what Jim Tressel accomplished at Ohio State, and that is how I will choose to remember him, in spite of the way his reign ended.

Maurice: I told you the last thing that Andy Geiger is going to be remembered for is Maurice Clarett. I owe it to history to touch on that because Jim Tressel is tagged with that, too. I wasn't on the inside then, so I admit I don't know all the details. But I have personal thoughts, based on things I observed. I think if Andy hadn't gotten so deep in the situation, that it could well have solved itself. I think Jim Tressel didn't or couldn't get into it, because Andy wanted to. If Andy had let Jim run it, I think it would have gotten solved. But Andy had this need to do it.

It started at the national championship game. This kid did all this talking about flying back for a funeral. That got it started. We all knew he didn't want to fly. He held onto the seats with white knuckles when he was on the airplane! The first time they flew he was quoted saying, "I'm gonna take some

Benadryl!" He was that scared. But he got the media stirred up, and they gave him a platform to complain that he was being kept from going home for that funeral. It didn't bother the team. That's just Maurice, they thought. Maurice has his own drummer.

Things escalated the next season. The national media wouldn't let it go. And of course, we had won the national championship. When you do that, it is like going on high definition TV. You had better have a close shave when they shine those bright lights on you. Maurice certainly did some things he shouldn't have. But he also said a lot of things that maybe were or were not truthful, and the media took all that he said as the truth and just escalated it.

Part of the problem was that Maurice got away with stuff. He didn't stay in the dorms, and all freshmen stayed in the dorms. He had a couple of fumbles up at Northwestern. You fumble twice, you are supposed to be through for the day. He argued with coaches. Nobody ever told him no, and so he went too far. I am sure in hindsight Jim would do some things differently. But I also like to think if Jim could have taken over the second year it would have been different. But Andy the boss wanted to be out there. I think that Jim could have saved Maurice. Maybe not, but I'd like to think that.

Admittedly, it would have been hard. Nobody ever told this youngster "no" from junior high on. He was such a star. He never played a full season for any high school. "You don't do things my way, I'll go over there" was his attitude. He was a great football player, ahead of his teammates growing up. So he got by doing that. Since he has been out of prison, Maurice himself has acknowledged that. In August of 2011, Maurice wrote an article about Coach Tressel's resignation on OurBuckeyeHub.com. Long after I wrote the above words of my own, Maurice echoed them in that blog article titled "Gone Too Soon." He describes what it felt like to never hear "no," to hear your name being cheered every week, and how "the moment can become intoxicating and overwhelming."

That was the Maurice who came to Ohio State. Maurice didn't have to listen to anyone; he had a whole lot of "yes" people. Nobody stood up to him, and that happened long before he got to Ohio State. He would take his ball and go someplace else. His mother was crazy about him. After all, he was a son—what mother wouldn't be? And it is hard for a mother to manage a guy by herself when he is that big, that strong, at that age. In that same blog, Maurice went on to admit that too when he wrote of "being more reactive than proactive" as a sixteen-year-old who experienced so much attention so early in life.

I don't think anyone inside the football program—the players or anybody that knows the program—would think Jim Tressel was at fault. I think he did the best he could in the situation he was in. Some say Jim shouldn't have recruited Maurice. That was easy to say for people, people who have never walked in a coach's shoes. I have been there and they are wrong. Those people have never stood in a kid's kitchen and seen an empty refrigerator. I have. They have never recruited a kid in December in a house with a sheet for a window. I have. They have never had to be Dad to a Diamond Warren, a Gary Brown, or a Gary Black. They have never seen the difference love and opportunity can make in a young man's life. They have never seen the kids whose

lives were bettered because a young coach back in Kansas City took a chance on them. I have. They have never faced a player telling them his ambition in life was to be a pimp, because pimps were his only male role models. I have. Has football become such a business, and is the thirst to win so great, that there is no margin anymore for a misstep? Have we forgotten this is still a game, still played by young men in their teens?

Jim Tressel saved many guys through his nurturing and guiding. They might have been out somewhere else. They have cleaned up their acts, earned degrees, and are contributing citizens today. Should they have been denied that chance to make it? I don't think anyone can fault Jim for giving the kid a chance to become something, like Jim had given so many kids. In his blog article, Maurice also says of Coach Tressel, "You can't be a fraud for 30 years." Maurice was able to see that Coach Tressel genuinely cared for his players, that he wanted to be the role model and father figure many of them didn't have.

I think Jim would have kept Maurice in football in some kind of legitimate way after his suspension, if he had that opportunity. As long as we had him in football, and he had that toy up there that he could dangle in front of him—you have to do this, to get this—there would have been a chance for Jim to turn him around. But when Maurice was suspended, Jim no longer had that leverage. When Maurice couldn't play, we had nothing for him. And when there was no longer us, meaning no longer the coaches to keep him on the straight and narrow, there was no longer anyone. Things just spiraled downward for the young man. I think Jim could have managed it given the chance. But it ended a sad, unfortunate situation, in which there were no winners.

Some have thought the Maurice saga cost Ohio State another national championship. I might agree. Ohio State lost only two games that year, by one touchdown at Wisconsin and by two at Ann Arbor. What if that team hadn't had all the distractions? What if Maurice had been in the backfield running TDs instead of running on the streets? It would have been a different team. There was plenty of talent to repeat. Santonio Holmes. Ben Hartsock. A.J. Hawk. Bobby Carpenter. Mike Nugent. Drew Carter. Nate Salley. Adrian Clarke. Nick Mangold. Alex Stepanovich. Shane Olivea. Darian Scott. Will Smith. Donte Whitner. Chris Gamble. Dustin Fox. Michael Jenkins. Craig Krenzel. Why, all of those guys eventually got a call to the NFL! It was a dream team. There were so many good ones, I had to double check the record book just to believe it myself! That team was loaded! All they lacked was the big pounding runner that Maurice had proven to be. Why, preseason he was in the Heisman talk. But it wasn't to be, and that potentially cost Ohio State and Coach Tressel a second consecutive national championship. Imagine the difference that would have made. Instead, Ohio State went to the Fiesta Bowl, and Maurice went to prison.

The way Coach Tressel handled the aftermath speaks of his caring for people and his players. After all that had happened, after what the media wrote, and after all it had cost Jim Tressel personally, Coach had every right to turn his back on Maurice Clarett. But he didn't. In one of the books it was quoted that Jim visited Maurice in prison. I believe that. In spite of all Maurice had done, I believe Jim was still trying to help him. Recent events bore that out.

When Maurice was released, Coach Tressel could have said, "You're no longer welcome here." But he didn't. He let Maurice work out. He helped him get back in shape. He helped him get back in school. It has been said that he wrote letters on his behalf, to the judge, to pro teams. In spite of all that Maurice did, Jim Tressel stood by him. I ask you, would a man who cares only about winning do that?

When I started this book, Maurice was playing professional football in the United Football League. Now, he is back in Columbus, helping with Roy Hall's nonprofit foundation Driven, which provides educational and motivational programs to youth. Give him credit. He's starting over, working to get his life in order and be a father. Who knows what his future brings? Only Father Time. In my mind, he's paid his dues, served his time. He deserves a chance.

People ask me, when a kid gets into trouble, or lets a coach down, what part is the coach and what part is the kid? Coaches have gotten to the point now, through their own doing and through NCAA regulations, where they can only have the athlete so many hours a week. That makes it tough for the coach to be a big influence on the athlete's life. Some players come to school, and all they talk about is "Playing on Sunday." Shoot, some of them can't even play here. How do they think they are going to "Play on Sunday?" "There are only 1,200 jobs in the NFL," I tell them, "and all 1,200 are not open every year." When I first began college coaching, we had the players 24/7. There was no limit to how long you could interact with them. The NFL was not on the television 24/7 and was not dangling the money it is dangling today. It was a lot easier to keep tabs on a kid and to guide them, to keep them out of trouble, than it is for coaches today.

A Feeding Frenzy: I have told you about seeing three OSU coaches fired. I never thought that Jim Tressel would be the fourth I would see leave on terms other than his own. Of course, I did see that and it was painful. Woody used to say that if they were not shooting at you, you were not on top. "They don't shoot at Indiana," Coach Hayes would say. "They don't shoot at Illinois." That was what happened to Jim Tressel. Jim got caught in a situation not all of his own doing, and he made a mistake. Once he did that, he gave them something to shoot at. We all know the rest of the story.

After that happened, I was asked if I wanted to change what we wrote in this chapter. I answered, "No, I still believe in Jim Tressel." I do. I think time has borne things out. Jim left gracefully. He took his lumps quietly. He recently emerged at the University of Akron ready to serve students again, this time in an outreach position where he can use his talents to mentor young people, the university, and the Akron community. At the Akron press conference, Jim was asked about what happened. Jim answered, "Anytime adversity comes, you reach to what you feel is your rock, and my faith happens to be my rock . . . God knows that we are not all perfect. He knows we all would like to do the best we possibly can, but I think He also recognizes intentions were very important, and my intentions have always been to help young people and help communities and help institutions." Jim Tressel and I share a belief in that same forgiving God. Thousands of other Buckeye Fans do, too. They showed that on November 24, 2012, at the close of the first quarter of

the Michigan game. As the 2002 national championship team was being honored on the north goal line, Jim's own players hoisted him on their shoulders and a thunderous roar of applause and appreciation shook the Horseshoe. Jim Tressel was welcomed home!

I have said coaching is one of the highest callings. Jim echoed that in the press conference at Akron when someone asked him what it would be like not coaching. "I'll be coaching every day," Jim said. "Coaching is not out of my blood, because coaching is serving, just like teaching is serving, just like administrating is serving, so that's not out of my blood. I'm an educator. I came here [to Akron] to be an educator. I got my undergrad . . . in education, so coaching will never leave me." Yes, Jim Tressel will still be coaching. It will just be in the classroom, in the community, in the service organizations, and not on that 100-yard field with that oblong ball.

Jim Tressel met adversity, reached a turning point in his life, and I think he will emerge stronger for it. He took the high road. He was handed lemons and chose to make lemonade. How ironic, because, at nearly the same age as Jim Tressel, I too had that same experience. I too reached a turning point. I too lost something that had been so important to me for years and years. I had to choose. Would I make lemonade? And you know what made it so ironic? Well, Jim Tressel was the one who handed me the lemons! Turn the page, and I'll tell the story.

Chapter 26

A GOING JESSE

When Coach Tressel came to Ohio State, he brought his own guy, Bob Tucker, into the football operations position. That was my job at the time, which meant I had to go. It was a move back to just being Associate AD, a move that, frankly, I was not happy to make. Bob did a great job, though, for Coach Tressel, and Bob and I remain friends today. Still, it was tough.

Quite honestly, it was the hardest thing I had to deal with in my entire working life. For the first time in fifty-one years, since back when I first put on the pads at Lincoln High, I wouldn't be involved some way in football. *Fifty-one years!* When the autumn leaves turned and the chill settled in the air, Bill Myles wouldn't be on the football field. When the pads popped, I wouldn't be on the sideline to hear them. When the big linemen grunted as they drove that sled, I wouldn't be riding it. When they planned the road trips, decided when to leave, determined where to stay, derived what the schedule was, I wouldn't be a part of that. The locker room would still carry the aroma of liniment and athletic tape, talcum powder and Icy Hot, of sweaty socks and jock straps, of musty thigh pads and grass-stained practice jerseys. But I wouldn't be in there to smell that. I wouldn't be a part of football in some way, for the first time in my life.

I had a choice to make. I could be bitter about it, and leave a bitter person, leave the university that I had given my all. Or I could embrace some new challenges with everything I had, and embrace those challenges just as I had embraced the football field for more than fifty years. I chose the high road and did the latter. As Robert Frost wrote, "that has made all the difference."

Had I just been director of football operations then, I would likely have been gone. But I previously told you I had wanted to keep my title as associate athletic director. So I was saved. When Bob Tucker took over, Andy gave me some other sports—what are now called the Olympic sports.

It wasn't an easy time for me, but given our history together, it also wasn't easy for Coach Tressel when he came in. He handled it with class, and looking back now, I am proud I did, too. Coach Tressel's version of that transition explains why it wasn't easy on either of us:

> Reflecting back on the day Bill spoke to my Youngstown team, and the light Bill Myles could be to a young person, fast forward now fifteen years later. I was coming back to Ohio State. It was really at the midnight hour, because I was coming in the eighteenth of January, and signing day was two weeks later. We had to hit the ground running. It was a bit of a gamble by Andy Geiger to take so long in

his search, but he wanted to be thorough. So here we were. We had to get going.

I knew Bill was a great resource for catching me up on the last fifteen years. It was a sort of a "Where have we gone since I left?" kind of thing. "What don't I know about things?" We would have an occasional discussion, philosophically, about where he sensed this group could go. The beautiful thing about Bill is, I don't care if you are 7 and 5, or 6 and 6, or 14 and 0. He looks at the kids as kids and doesn't view them as whether they won or lost games. He views them as where do they need to grow to be better men. Bill gave me great insight.

Bill was also at a transitional point, and I was sitting there saying, "I've got a ten-year plan." I decided to have three of the staff members on John's staff stay. I had been around them, knew them, and didn't think they would have to make a big change for the standpoint of trying to figure out what the head coach believes in, because I knew them. But I also had a number of guys working for me at Youngstown State. Bob Tucker had been here with us at Ohio State, had next spent ten years as a head coach, and finally had come back to us at Youngstown. I thought Bob would be the perfect guy to run the program administratively, as I would have a lot more things tugging at me than at Youngstown. So Bob Tucker took over football operations, which Bill had been doing with John Cooper.

All Bill wanted to do was what the team needed. Would he have preferred to stay in football, day to day? Absolutely! As you look back now, you think—I do, anyway—that what he was able to take from his fifty years of experience in working with football teams, to our other sports that he was in charge of, was significant. It was a transitional time. We were moving into the Jesse Owens Stadium. We were not running in the Horseshoe that Jesse Owens ran in. We had just opened the Bill Davis Baseball Stadium. We had just opened the Schott a couple of years earlier. We were in a transitional state from an athletic department standpoint, and I think of what Bill was able to do for the others. Yes, it was a tough time in Bill's life. It was a tough time in mine, too, to say, "You know what, here is a guy I know, here is a guy I trust." We certainly could have fixed the lineup such that he was a part of it. But what I have always believed in is, you sit down and say, "Okay what's the best thing for us to do?" and try not to have your emotions tug.

That's what Bill did too. Bill could have been bitter. But instead, his reaction was, "Whoa, this isn't the best thing for me. But if I have to play left field instead of being the pitcher now, I'm going to play left field, and I'm going to be the best left fielder I can be." That shows you the kind of person he is. To me, the greatest indicator of the impression he left on kids—in football, and then kids in the other sports at the Jesse—is when they come back, the first guy they go see is Bill Myles. Bill has a little bit better ability than most of us from a pace standpoint. Bill can sit down and you think that he has nothing else to do other than be with you. He's never fidgeting, he's never wor-

rying about what is next because what's next isn't important. What is going on now is important. You see the indication those kids felt that when they come back years later and look for Bill. I can't tell you how many kids came back to the Woody Hayes Center in my first five years and didn't know that he was over in the Jesse. "Where's Coach Myles?" they would ask. It was like something was wrong to them, because he had been here ever since Woody.

Bill's team was going to be his team. It didn't matter whether Bill was at Kansas City Southeast, or Nebraska, or Ohio State, or Ohio State field hockey, his team was his team. His kids were his kids. It didn't matter if it was six in the morning when the buses left, Bill was there.

I experienced another indication of the kind of person Bill is when we went back to Lincoln, Nebraska, in the spring of 2010. One day I was sitting at a tennis match, and Bill was sitting there, too. We were talking, and I told Bill, "You know what, in a couple of weeks I'm going out to speak at the University of Nebraska. Why don't you go with me? They're sending a plane here."

"Yeah," Bill said.

It was so much fun going back and walking around that campus, just seeing the glow on him. As soon as the plane landed, boom, you know Bill. It was a history lesson. "There's A street, now do you know why the streets are A, B, C, D?" Everything is a history lesson with Bill Myles. Now the people that have been there the last twenty-five years, they didn't know him. But the people who had been there fifty years, or the Tom Osbornes, or the equipment guy who has been there for life, it was as if they were seeing their best friend and they hadn't seen him since 1977!

Bill is a unique guy, he's his own guy. He has that ability just to make everyone think that he is thinking about them. And he is. It's not a phony thing with Bill Myles.

So that was how I left football operations. Andy gave me the Olympic sports; I had men's and women's tennis, men's and women's soccer, men's and women's lacrosse, field hockey, and women's softball. They were all over at the Jesse Owens facility, and I moved from a nice office in the athletic department to a smaller one in the coaches' offices beneath the Jesse grandstand. That didn't matter, though. Right away, I started building up those sports, talking about "The Jesse," about what a facility it was and how great our teams were performing. On Monday mornings, Andy, and then Gene when he came, would have the Athletic Department Leadership Team staff meeting. When it came my turn, I would say, "The Jesse had a great week. The Jesse went undefeated." Or maybe, "The Jesse went 6-1 last week. Anybody else in here go 6-1?" Soon everybody would be teasing me, "Well, Bill, what did the Jesse do this week?"

Moving to athletic administration from coaching was an experience. Moving from football administration to the Jesse Owens facility was another. I understood how coaches thought, and I looked at the job as my responsibility to put the coach in a position where he or she would have an opportunity

to experience success. I had coached players before, and over there I coached coaches. That was the way I always looked at the associate athletic director job, and the way I looked at it when I went to The Jesse.

Wired Differently: Now, there were some differences when I went over there. Don't get me wrong. Early on, I had an experience in that State Up North that illuminated to me one difference between men and women athletes, and helped me better coach the coaches of the women's teams. I really enjoyed working with the women's sports, and athletes are athletes. Men or women, they all work hard, compete hard, train hard. I always consider them equals. I told you of working with Phyllis Bailey to elevate the Ohio State women's programs. Still, I did have an experience one time that left me scratching my head.

I was up in Ann Arbor with the women's softball team when they played Michigan. It was one of those games you remember. Tough! Hard fought! Emotional! The game was nip and tuck, and we went into the bottom of the last inning tied. Then Michigan scored to win the game. Our girls were devastated. They were crushed! Every one of them was crying, just bawling their eyes out. In all my years of coaching football, why, I had never seen anything like it! I think they shed enough tears that Michigan didn't even have to water down the infield after that game!

Then we shook hands and got on the bus to head back to Columbus. We were not fifteen miles outside of Ann Arbor, and those very same women started singing, "99 Bottles of Beer . . ."

I, too, once sang "99 Bottles of Beer" on a team bus. It had been in high school, though. And it had been after a win. I mean, this was Michigan! Fifteen minutes ago, we had just lost, and to our archrival no less. Yet here were our girls, girls who had just bawled their eyes out, now on the bus singing "99 Bottles of Beer"! I looked back there dumbfounded. Just dumbfounded!

When our football team would lose a game, you could hear a pin drop all the way home. No one said anything. Not one word. The pain and anger hung in the air. If you did hear something, it was a guy grumbling to himself—or a fist going through an equipment locker or a seat back. Of course, when we sang "99 Bottles of Beer" back in high school, we maybe got down to 80 before it faded out. Not these girls! They got down to 80 and they were just warming up! When they got down to 50, I again peered over my shoulder and thought, "Praise the Lord that Woody Hayes or Earle Bruce is not on this bus." I mean, Woody and Earle would have been back there fighting with someone by then if our guys had been singing that after a loss.

These girls just kept going. When they got down to the 30s, well *I was ready to go back there and fight someone myself*! Luckily, about that time, they finally wore it out. That experience did help me. It helped me understand the differences in which some men's teams and some women's teams deal with things. It helped me understand that this team—at least these women—got it all out there right now and then could let it go. And it did help me understand that different coaches needed different approaches. Still. Even today, I shake my head! *99 Bottles of Beer?* For gosh sakes, *this was Michigan* . . .

Success: Mostly though, it wasn't any different. By now you've heard me say several times that it is the coach's responsibility to put the kid where he or she could experience success. That is by giving the player proper training, getting him or her proper equipment, teaching him or her correct techniques, and not putting him or her in a situation where the player couldn't experience success. I applied that same philosophy to my coaches at the Jesse.

Success as a coach, of course, is not just winning games; success is many other things. Success is excellence in the classroom. Success is graduation. Success is class in the program, on and off the field. Success is recruiting student athletes you can be proud of. Mostly, though, success is teaching the student athlete to leave a better person than he or she was when they came to you. I thought that as the associate AD, that was my primary job—to teach my coaches to be successful in all of these aspects. I did the same when I went over to the Jesse. I told each coach, "I will be at ten, twelve, maybe fifteen of your practices to see what you're doing. Don't put on a show just for me. If it is your day for just having fun and getting the guys loose, do that. But sometime, during the twelve or fifteen times that I am there, I want to see some teaching. I want to see teaching going on because that's what you're here to do. I understand there are some days that need to be relaxed days, and just loosening up, but that doesn't happen *every* day." I also told them I wanted to see what they were doing in the community, to see if they were teaching their players things other than just that game. Despite what some people may think, that is what we do in athletics at Ohio State.

I talked a lot with the Jesse coaches. They would come and ask me how I would handle a situation, particularly after I had been in the job longer and was hiring new coaches. They would have me talk to their teams. I would leave home early. If they would tell me they were leaving at 6:30 in the morning, I would be down there. The coaches wanted me to talk to their team before they got on the bus to leave. The men's lacrosse team, the women's softball team, women's lacrosse, the tennis teams, all those coaches wanted me to talk to their teams. I would meet those teams from the Jesse when they went on a trip. I would go to all of their games at home.

I had different speeches I would give them. I used the CHAMPS speech I had used back at Lincoln High. That may sound corny for college athletes, but they ate it up. Other times I would talk to them about being together. It was the *One Step Closer* speech I had used for Coach Tressel's team.

"If you believe you know all of your assignments for this game, *take one step closer.*"

"If you can give everything you have for three hours, take *one step closer.*"

"If you know you can count on the person beside you, *take one step closer.*"

"We gotta get close, we gotta do this, *take one step closer.*"

"*We can't get any closer than this,*" I would finally say, and I would be in the middle of them, and they would be so close they'd be squeezing my shoulders in. I once did that speech with the women's softball team, and when I was done, they had me pinned in the middle of the group. Pinned! I couldn't move!

I built pride in my group and my sports. We did well. Some of them won

championships for the first time. Softball won a championship my last year. They are winning a lot of championships now, and some of the coaches I brought in have developed national powers. The powers above at times wanted to get rid of some of my coaches, but I stood up for them. I kept coaching them, advising them and suggesting how to handle different things. I enjoyed it very much, because I was coaching, and I had a close relationship with the coaches of those sports. When I retired, our coaches, players, and staff gave me awards, pictures, and mementos that meant a lot to me.

One of my greatest hires was in tennis. I had to battle "the powers that be" to hire Ty Tucker. But in fourteen years, this guy I brought in has elevated Ohio State Tennis to the elite status, capable of playing with any program in the country. As of this writing, his OSU career record is 395 wins and 62 losses! Ty's teams have won eight Big Ten championships in fourteen years. We now have one of the finest college tennis stadiums around. In 2009, he was named National Coach of the Year when Ohio State advanced to the national finals in the NCAA tournament. His teams have advanced to the NCAA quarter finals or beyond nine times in the fourteen years! His 2012 NCAA doubles champions are the only team in NCAA history to win all three major collegiate championships in one season. In 2013, OSU won its first NCAA singles championship in program history. Before Ty arrived, OSU only had two Big Ten tennis championships in the school's history! The accolades go on and on, but probably the best indicator of Ty's success is not a stat. It's that tennis, like baseball, is a warm weather sport. Yet Ohio State is now going nose to nose with the elite programs on the coasts and across the South.

Ty Tucker means a lot to me, because of the role I was able to play in helping him develop into the coach he is. Ty's words illustrate how I attacked my new challenge over at the Jesse, and the relationships I developed not only with Ty, but also with all those coaches:

> Bill Myles could have come over to the Jesse and been unhappy, but he came here and set about making the programs the best they could be. Bill had coached his whole life and had been around football and some big things. It was great to be under someone who understood the problems you face in coaching, and understood the personalities and the egos. You could bump into Bill at the office any time and run anything by the man. He was bright, he was clever, and anything you asked him, he had seen before. As a young coach, to have a guy who has your back, and has the answers to ninety percent of your questions, I mean it made me who I am today! Without Bill Myles, the success of Ohio State Tennis wouldn't be there.
>
> Bill can tell—after talking with a kid for ten minutes—which ones are going to be a handful! There are NBA and NFL programs that spend a hundred thousand dollars trying to check the background of players they are going to draft in the high rounds. Bill Myles knew character from talking to a kid, and he didn't need much time to tell you who was going to be able to survive in my program, and who wasn't. He knew we ran a no-nonsense program and when I brought

these recruits in on a visit, he would spend fifteen or twenty minutes talking to them. I haven't seen anybody bat ninety percent on judging character like Bill did. I ran all my recruiting through Bill Myles.

Bill knew how to watch your back. He had some good coaches and he knew how to take care of them. He knew how to put a bird in somebody's ear and to navigate the politics of a large university. You didn't even have to ask. Bill was in their ear and knew how to grease the wheels to get things done.

The man was fair. When you have men's and women's tennis, men's and women's soccer, and men's and women's lacrosse, everybody wants to be on the best court. Every coach wants their camp on the best field. Bill was good at keeping a lot of people happy, and it was just a pleasure to work with him. I wouldn't be anywhere today without him.

The Jesse sports never got the attention that Bill gave them until he came. I never played one home match where he wasn't at the match. He was at every sporting event that he could be. I mean, the guy never missed a soccer game, never missed a tennis match, never missed lacrosse, or field hockey. He was there. How could you ever want anything more than that?

When you have someone watching the guys compete, he is seeing you out there coaching. When Bill said, "You know, that guy has to give a little more effort," you had to think twice about whether you wanted to put him back in. Bill knew athletes, he knew who the blue chippers were. Bill had a saying. "*You gotta get these blue chips,*" he would say. "You might do a good job with the red chips, but you're never going to see that red chip be able to make up for that top of the lineup and hold down a blue chip spot."

I wasn't the only one who had success. The lacrosse coach got maybe the number one job in the nation at North Carolina. Men's soccer has done an unbelievable job, going to the NCAA finals! Men's tennis went to the NCAA finals. Field hockey was always in the NCAA tournament.

The kids loved him. Bill was old school. They would laugh a bit, because he was so old school. He would wear a pair of scarlet slacks with his name in cursive on the pocket and they would get a kick out of that. But when he would give them the prematch speech, or give them a pep talk on the bus before an away game, let me tell you something—they would hang on what he said and you would hear them repeating it for four or five years afterwards. I remember Bill telling my guys that we were going to beat Michigan, and him saying, "*You know what Woody said. Every time Woody had to go take a number two, he said, 'I have to go take a Michigan.'*" When Bill was done, the kids knew—this is what we're here to do; we're here to win championships, and we're here to beat Michigan.

Bill knew sports history. I always joked with him that his biggest downfall was that he thought that the Cleveland Browns running back, Jim Brown, could be the best at every sport there was. Bill

would come back to me, "You're just lucky that Jim Brown didn't take up tennis!"

Bill Myles was class. You knew where you stood. There was no lying. If he was mad, you knew it, yet you never had to worry about the man having your back. I mean, as a coach, as a university, what more could you want?

Overtime

The Huntington Club
Ohio Stadium

2007

Clinic Reading

Chapter 27

TIME AND CHANGE

My story has come full circle, and I have talked about the changes in my lifetime. Things are very different from when I coached in high school, yet society is still fighting some of the same problems I did fifty years ago! On top of that, new ones have emerged.

I taught my very first players, "Tigers don't do this, Tigers do that." That was what made a winning team. Now, too many times the coach does not get that chance. It is the guy on the corner, swinging that gold chain around his finger, who is getting to the kids in too many communities. "Man, you don't want to do that," that guy with the chain tells them. "We got this thing going on over here and we can do this, we can whip this game on this guy, this guy is going to give us big money for this. I got this jewelry here. I got fancy clothes. I got girls. I got this car. You can smoke this, you can sell this powder, you can shoot this dope. You can do all this and be like me." And of course, the guy telling them that is the guy in the neighborhood with all the money. This environment hurts the coach today. Before, in my era, you had the kids.

So many more things can draw kids away now. Guns are so available. Drugs are so available. When I was in high school, if you were good with your fists, you were okay. Today, being good with your fists doesn't matter. Someone will just shoot you. You say something to a guy, and if he leaves, you had better leave, too, because if you've done something to him, he may come back with a gun. You see that in the paper every day in a big city, watch it on TV every night. How are we as a society going to say *enough*, and turn that around?

It is a badge of honor not to talk to the police. Someone will be murdered in front of twenty people, yet not one single person will "see" who did it! We had a guy beat up one of my little halfbacks. The halfback's mother decided that she was going to prosecute. They put the offender in jail. Everyone was afraid of him. They wanted me to go down to court and testify. I did. I knew the kid. I had tried to get him out for football, because he was strong and tough. But he couldn't put up with the discipline of football. After I testified, he was sentenced to some jail time. I figured that next time I saw that kid, he was going to want to go to war with me. But when I saw him, he just said, "Hello, Coach!" There was something—I don't know what it was—but I managed to get respect as a coach that helped me through many situations like that. The inner cities need more men like that as role models today.

I have explained that I started during turbulent times, and I told about the '60s. I have told about the ghetto. I had my times with those guys, but even now, I can go down the street when I go back, and they still go, "Hey,

Coach." Many of them turned into good people. Some didn't. Some are in the cooler. Some are dead, because they got shot. But there are many who tell me I made a difference in their lives. What better satisfaction than to be a difference maker? Where are the difference makers for our kids today? Our inner cities are the hardest jobs, but where are the best teachers and the best pay? Often in other places, of course.

People look at football coaches and football players as tough guys. We have a stereotype. Most of us, though, are more than that. I hope you have learned through my story that I am. Sure, X's and O's and Winning have been my life, but I hope I have convinced you that was but a part of it.

A Ticket Out? When I was growing up, parents looked at an education more as a ticket out, compared to the way some look at it today. But when I was young, you didn't see baseball every day on television. You didn't see football three or four days a week. You didn't see NBA basketball for seven months. Now, anytime I turn on my television, I can find some football.

Now kids see the black athlete with all the jewelry and the money. When I was growing up and Jackie Robinson was just making it, he surely wasn't highly paid. Blacks then were waiting tables, running on the railroad, working in the slaughterhouses. Lorita's father was a waiter on the Frisco Railroad for more than forty years, but he gave his daughter a college education from that. His priority was to provide for his family—a home, his daughters' college schooling, and numerous other experiences.

At the beginning of my story, I mentioned Charles Coulter's description of the first day of school in 1919 Kansas City. Coulter writes how education was a main priority for blacks following the Civil War. He states that former slaves "figured that there must be something valuable in something that slave owners had fought to deny them all those many years."

Think about what that line says about the importance of education to previous generations. Is education as valued by everyone in our world today? In 1919, education was so prized that parents attended the first day of school, so prized that a doctor, a lawyer, a preacher, and two newspaper editors took time out of their day to be there. Did that happen in your community's school at the start of this year? Did your newspaper send a reporter to cover it? We have raised a generation in which too many no longer see education as the way up and out.

We truly were raised by a village. But today, gangs have replaced the village of my era for too many kids. Mom and Dad to some extent are scared of their kids now. Principals at the schools tell me about sitting there talking, and Mom will say something, and the kid will say to her, "Shut up!" Right in front of the principal. If I had ever said that to my dad, I had better been ducking.

Kids Raising Kids: Of course, there is the poverty cycle. Kids having kids. I knew a student that had her own kids at age fifteen. Her mama was only fourteen when she had that student. That made her mama a grandma at only twenty-nine. You have not acquired a lot of wisdom when you have three generations under age thirty. If Mom is not around, or Dad is not around,

then you have nothing to hang your hat on. In my time, Mom could mess up my day just by telling me, "When your Dad gets home . . ."

The girl I mentioned—the one that was fifteen and her mother was twenty-nine—said to me, "He told me he loved me." She wanted to get away from taking care of her brothers and sisters. There was no love in her home, so she thought she would get it from him. If all a guy has to do is say he loves her, that is not hard to tell her. If he is going to get the prize by saying that, it is not hard for a guy to say.

Then, too, there is so much more money in drugs now. We hear about the inner city, but it is not just that. As I write this, they just arrested five kids here in upper class Worthington, Ohio. Drugs! These kids, five of them, were arrested. Now, the people in Worthington are not oatmeal, missed meal, skipped meal. They are not "eating air sandwiches," as one of my players used to say. These kids were getting all this money. They had no need to do that. A couple of weeks before that, it happened over at Upper Arlington. We have no richer public school in this area than Upper Arlington. It is not just a class issue.

How are we going to turn things around? I know it is not going to be by doing what we are doing now, cutting the activities in our schools that keep kids guided. We're not going to turn it around by cutting band and choir and clubs and sports. When we have too many kids alone on the streets, too many kids without role models in their lives, we're not going to turn it around by taking away the very things that provide structure and guidance.

Look at the Toledo, Ohio, schools. In 2010, Toledo could not pass their levy, and the state cut school funding, so they eliminated junior high and freshmen sports. In 2010, junior high sports were gone! In response, the other wealthier private schools pulled out of the Toledo City League. Now, the league that remains is just the Toledo Public Schools—half of which are inner city schools. These are the same Toledo schools that produced Jim Parker, that produced Bob Momsen, that produced Willie Harper, and produced Jim Jackson. Do you think those kinds of great athletes are going to flock to a school system that cannot even field a freshman football team or basketball team? More than 2,000 students reportedly left the Toledo school system the next year. And Toledo was scrambling to find a way to fund summer recreation programs, because they had a rash of shootings. Kids shooting kids. Duh! In 2012, Ohio State's own Jimmy Jackson stepped up to raise some money so the schools could have a freshman basketball program. Even then, some of the schools could not come up with enough kids to play. Those kids that are not playing, where are they? Well, too many of them are on the streets.

Air Sandwiches: At one of my college coaching stops, we had a player that made All-American and was going to be a high pro draft choice. His father came in to see him. That player told me his mother was fifteen when she had him. This kid's father had left the boy and his fifteen-year-old mother to fend for themselves in the ghetto. He had not seen his father in all this time, in all of the twenty-two years since he had been born. This player was going to be a first-round draft choice and worth a lot, so all of a sudden, after twenty-two

years, this phantom father showed up in our locker room, wanting to get in on his son's money.

The player said to his dad, "I don't know you."

The dad said something else.

The kid again said to his dad, "I don't know you."

"What do you mean, you don't know me?" the dad asked.

"Where were you when I was eating those air sandwiches?" the kid asked. "Oatmeal, missed meal, skipped meal. Where were you then? Now that I'm going to get some money, you show up. You know what air sandwiches are? Nothing! That's what we had to eat."

You learn something from these kinds of guys. The kid did not know anything about his dad. His dad was not there when he was going through school. He was not there to provide, to nurture, to come to his games. Then all of a sudden, the kid became a star, and the guy saw the kid's mother's name in the paper. He said, "Shoot, that's my kid, and he's getting ready to be a millionaire." Of course, then he showed up with his hand out. That player gave his dad what he deserved. But think about that. Think about how hard that would have been to do, to disown your own father. I give that player all the credit. He is a role model today. Still, it was hard to watch.

You do not get close to very many males if you are a young black man growing up in the inner city without a father. Males are in competition with you. Jobs are few, and you are all going out looking for the same job or competing for the same hustle. It is one or the other unless you can find a way out. You do not have a lot of respect for women, because nobody has taught you that. You do not see your father showing it to your mother. You do not see boyfriends showing it.

It is not just a black problem. It is a white problem, a Hispanic problem, a society problem. It is all the groups. And what has made it bad now? It is not just poor people. You look at television. You see these movie stars who have millions of dollars, and they say they are not going to marry, yet they are having kids. It is just not a stigma anymore, unlike when I was growing up. Some guys on my high school team did everything to keep from letting you know that they didn't have a father at home. They did not want you to know that they were born out of wedlock. Now the pros, the movie stars, the public figures that have families, too many of them have kids with other people.

One High School Towns: Another challenge today is finding coaches for the inner cities. They are having a hard time here in Columbus, where I live. Many former players who would be good coaches can make more money somewhere else. They can make more money now going into something besides the teaching profession. So do you blame them? I don't. But it is a real problem.

Then, too, in some places the kids just do not want to play now. When we were in high school, wearing a letter sweater, playing football, being a cheerleader was a way of being noticed. Now, with the gangs, an athlete is not what he or she was when I was in high school. Not long ago, I looked at the Columbus East High School band. Twelve or fifteen people out there for

the band! Twelve or fifteen! Out of a school of maybe five or six hundred students. I thought back to the band when I was in high school, how big it was.

One place that has not changed is what I call "one high school towns." With small towns, the one high school towns, the football field is still where it is happening on Friday nights. Everybody is there. The kids can still walk a lot of places in those communities. People see you at the gas station and tell you how you did. It is still like when I was in high school, and the guy up at Neil's Drug Store would say, "I saw you the other night and that guy was kind of tough on you." You knew someone cared. You knew you were being watched; you were a part of something that mattered. It makes a difference.

The one high school towns keep records. I was over at the Woody Hayes equipment room one day with Rob Lachey. He had a book about St. Henry football, with all their statistics. It had the list of all the kids that had played. It told about Jim Lachey, who was their first great player. They did not have football but a couple or three years before Jim. It told about Jeff Hartings. It told about Bobby Hoying. It told of all the guys who played pro football from little St. Henry. It had their records. Where they went to college. Who carried the ball. How many times. But it wasn't just the pro athletes. That book listed every guy who had ever played football at St. Henry High School. All the coaches. That was little St. Henry, a Division V school, yet it was a big deal. How many inner city schools even know who played five years ago?

Turning Things Around: One of the effects of the shortage of coaches is that today, coaches are not in the building. I have asked some, "How can you coach?" When I was head coach, I had lunchroom duty. I saw my players. If one got in trouble, someone was going to call me. I could usually get involved and do something. I went into the teachers' lounge, and they told me how my guys were doing. You miss that. But that is the way it is now because they have trouble getting people to coach. Coaching takes a toll on the coach's family life. Coaching is hard. Coaching is long hours. Coaching is low pay.

People ask me, with the environment some of these kids are in, what can schools realistically do to turn things around? You have to get a coach and key people that are really into it. You need coaches and teachers for whom time is no essence. You need people who are scientists, who are going to stay there after school with the chemistry club. You need people going to the science fair. The choir. The band. It is more difficult now. Kids have to get on the bus when school is out. They are not going to stay after school and miss the bus to be in science club, if both parents are in low wage jobs and do not have the time or money to transport them. Maybe an older brother or sister has to be at home looking out for the younger ones, because the only parent in the house is working two jobs.

Students get a false concept in some inner city schools. They make the National Honor Society. But in some schools today, the top kids would not have made National Honor Society at Lincoln High School when I was there. But blame the adults for that. Don't blame the kids. I had a player that played for me here at Ohio State. He was a National Honor Society member from an inner city high school in a major city. He graduated from here, got his degree from here, but this guy would not have been National Honor Society in lots

of other places. I recruited that kid hard. I went to his high school every week. I once saw him turn in a chemistry paper, and there weren't four people in his class that turned in their term paper. That was when I decided that this guy was a keeper for me. I saw him typing that term paper with one finger. It was several pages, and there was the guy typing that paper with one finger. I had been to his house. In the dead of winter, his house was freezing cold. He could have slid by, and no one would have said anything. But there the kid was, typing that term paper with one finger. Tap. Tap. Tap. Why shouldn't he be National Honor Society in the environment in which he was raised? That kid was giving all he had in spite of his surroundings. I told myself then that kid was a keeper, and he proved me right. He gave us all he had on the field. He earned his degree from Ohio State, and he played several years in the NFL. He's a successful guy. All because football gave him a chance.

There are thousands of those kids out there. Kids we could reach if we put our minds and our resources to it. Kids who could be scientists. Kids who could be teachers. Kids who could be physicians. Despite the barriers we broke. Despite Brown versus Board of Education. Despite the Civil Rights Act. Despite the end of segregation. Despite Affirmative Action. Despite it all, we're still losing way too many kids. Things have changed in my life, and so much for the better. Still, there is so much left to do for those generations who follow!

I started this story as a young child at a time of limited opportunities. As I bring it to a close, that is still the case for too many children today. In my youth, the barrier was race. For too many today—regardless of color—the barrier to opportunity may be poverty or family or lack of education or drugs. Whatever the reason, the barriers are still there, and those following have more work to do to knock them down. I have done my part, and I am confident there are many other young and budding Billy Myles out there—my protégés included—eager to pick up the torch for the next generation.

Will you be one of them?

Chapter 28

I JUST GOT ON THE BUS

On June 30, 2007, I had served thirty-plus years in The Ohio State University Athletic Department. I was seventy years old, and including my time in high school and at Nebraska, I had worked in athletics forty-five years of my life. I had grandkids I wanted to see play sports. It seemed like the time was right to go. June 30th was also fifty years to the day that Lorita and I had been married. So we did it right. That weekend we celebrated both my retirement, and fifty years of wedded bliss, in a grand way.

When your daughter is a sharp businesswoman with her own successful event planning company, that is not hard to do. Debbie went to work and planned a weekend of wonderful events. Over three hundred friends, coworkers, and former players attended two dinners, the first one an open house in our backyard and the second one most appropriately at the Huntington Club in Ohio Stadium. Guests from twenty-two different states, from California to Connecticut, were greeted by a life-size photo cutout of our kids and grandchildren welcoming people to the Horseshoe. Archie was there, as was Coach Tressel, Clark Kellogg, and many of the coaches from the Jesse. Bill Willis was there. Gene Huey, who coached at Nebraska and nineteen years for the Colts, came from Indianapolis. Former players included Luther Henson and Joe Lukens. Chris Ward flew all the way from California, as did Gary Black, the guy I kicked off the team at Lincoln High. Of course, Jim Buford, the guy I first coached with, was there. Even Vera Roulette, my babysitter when I was a toddler, came all the way from Kansas City. I had no idea so many people wanted to congratulate Lorita for fifty years of putting up with me!

That event was more than a celebration of Bill and Lorita Myles. It was a vindication of the American Dream. By now you should appreciate what so many people went through in order for me to be at The Ohio State University. A lot of guys paid a price. Some of them lived to see me in that chair and some did not. I sometimes think about how fortunate I am, standing on so many people's shoulders, standing on those who sacrificed for me to end up at Drake University, at Nebraska, and at Ohio State. *The place you are seeking is seeking you.*

I was lucky and blessed to be at a place in history where I had opportunity. When I go back to Kansas City now, they all tease me. They say, "Man, you're lucky."

"I just got on the bus," I tell them, "I didn't fight anything. I just got on the bus. I just went where I was supposed to go." It is a figure of speech, but it is true. All the stuff that happened to me, well, I did just get on the bus. To get from my house to the Paseo Y, I had to take the bus. To get to Lincoln

High, every day I got on the bus. When we went to play out at Muskogee, Oklahoma, we rode there on the bus. When I went to Drake for my first visit, Mom and I went on the bus. I just got on the bus. I didn't ask for any transfers. Wherever the bus went, I went. In 1972, I traded the bus for an airplane and when it left Kansas City for Lincoln, Nebraska, I was on it. Six years later, after Woody Hayes had sent three overtures to me, I finally hopped aboard and headed to Columbus. Lorita does not like to hear me say that, because she says I have earned everything I have. But I tell her, "Shucks, Lorita, I just got on the bus and took the ride."

Of course, I was lucky to be at the stop when the bus came by, and lucky to come in an era when I did not have to ride at the back of that bus! That is why I believe so much in *Place*. My folks were married fifteen-and-a-half years before I came along, so I easily could have been in the early twenties. I might have been ten when the stock market crashed; I would have graduated from high school just before the start of World War II. I definitely would not have played American Legion Baseball or in the first integrated basketball game in K.C. I would not have been a kid watching Jackie breaking the barrier or admiring Bill Willis. I might never have had the chance to go to college, and if I could have gone, it would have been a Lincoln University rather than an integrated school. There would not have been a black head coach at the white Southeast High School. Born fifteen years earlier, I would have reached thirty-six, the age I was when I started at Nebraska, in 1957. I am fairly certain Nebraska did not have a black assistant coach in 1957.

While not being born earlier had a great impact on my life, the fact that I was not born at a later time also helped. Had I come later, I would not have gone to segregated schools. I would not have traveled to play football in Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas, Illinois, and Missouri. I would not have played against Jimmy Pace, the eventual All-American at Michigan, or Prentice Gaut, the future University of Oklahoma and NFL star. Had I come later, there would not have been any Monarchs. I probably wouldn't have seen Satchel and Jackie hanging around the Streets Hotel or Paseo Y. And I would have been one of many black faces at the clinics, one of many interviewing for jobs. It's ironic. Segregation held my race back in so many ways for so many years and denied so many opportunities. But for me, in football, in one way it meant opportunity. Don't get me wrong; had segregation continued, those opportunities would have ended at a historically black university, instead of the Drakes, the Nebraskas, and the Ohio States.

There I was at the divide, one foot in the past, the other stepping into the new world. So I did have a chance to get on the bus. Lorita is right, though: when that bus pulled up and opened its door, I was prepared to climb on it. I was prepared to handle it, and prepared to earn the right to sit at the front.

Many people paid their dues for me, but that is true for most people who get an opportunity. There is someone down the line who has paid some dues for that person. Look at the Kennedy family, for example. And that is the challenge that society has today. Who will pay the dues for the next generation?

Of course, that was what Woody was saying with his *Pay Forward* speech. You cannot pay backwards, you have to pay forward. You cannot pay Mom and Dad back. I cannot pay Coach White back. I cannot pay Coach

Kirkpatrick back. I cannot repay Don Motley. I cannot pay Ed Voltmer, my advisor at Drake, who put me in a class on administration of college athletics. I did not know back then that I would become an administrator. I cannot repay Ed Voltmer for that foresight. But I can pay forward for Debbie and Billy. I can pay forward for all the young players that come under my wing. I heard Woody give that *Pay Forward* speech a hundred times. Certainly, the most famous was his commencement address in his twilight years after the firing, and less than a year before he died. "Today is the greatest day of my life," Woody told the graduates that day, and then the old Coach went on to say:

> So seldom can we pay back because those who helped most—your parents and other people—will be gone, but you'll find that you do want to pay. Emerson had something to say about that: "You can pay back only seldom. But," he said, "you can always pay forward, and you must pay line for line, deed for deed, and cent for cent."

Woody was right. That is what my folks did. Pay Forward. Dad did not get a college education, but my parents made sure that we three boys did. Each generation is supposed to do more than the previous. My son and daughter are doing more than Lorita and I did. And my grandson and granddaughter should do more than their mother and father.

I look at my players. I look at Chris Ward, a minister in Los Angeles. I look at Joe Lukens, the player who gave the Bill Myles Football Scholarship in my name to Ohio State. I look at Jim Lachey who came back and gave a scholarship to Ohio State the very first year after he was in pro ball. That is what Woody meant about paying forward. I am not paying my folks back. I am paying forward through the good work being done by the people I nurtured and molded.

In the twilight of my career, I was honored with several awards. One that meant a lot was when I returned to Drake University to accept the Drake University Double D award for my athletic achievements as a student there. Later they presented me with their Distinguished Service Award as an alumnus. I like to joke they honored two people that year—a wealthy guy, and Bill Myles.

In 1998, I was humbled to receive the Ohio Gold Award. I was the first black to win that award. That put me in heady company. Archie won it shortly after I did, and then Eddie George. Jack Nicklaus has won it. John Cooper has. Jim Tressel has. And of course, I told you about Anne Hayes winning it. But it is not just athletic people. Several governors have won it. Senator Glenn has won it.

When I retired, the Stadium Crew and Don Patko gave me another trophy that I really cherish. From a distance, it does not look like much—just a block of wood with a piece of iron on it. It is far from that. The base is a two-inch thick slab of wood, probably oak, sanded smooth and highly polished, with a clear finish that shows off the marks and indentations of years and years of history. Fastened atop it is a four-inch section of railroad iron painted jet black. It is simple but commanding. You see, the wooden base is a piece of the original wooden seats that were in Ohio Stadium when it opened, and the

iron a section of actual rail from the railroad used to build the Stadium. Simple. Beautiful. A work of art. A piece of history.

To hold the weight of that thing is to feel the ghosts of Chic Harley, Thomas French, Howard Dwight Smith, Lynn St. John, and all who enabled a new stadium. Put it to your ear, and you can hear the roars for Les Horvath, Hop Cassidy, Vic Janowicz. Listen closely and there is the stunned silence when Notre Dame scored to win in '35, or the contrasting roar of the '36 crowd when the band marched *Script Ohio* the very first time. Strain your ear to hear the faint murmur of the crowd, as that murmur builds and builds the day against North Carolina, when an unknown named Archie Griffin started ripping off run after run after run. Rub your hand over the iron and you can feel the bitter cold of the 1950 Snow Bowl. See in the blackness of that rail Paul Brown giving Bill Willis the chance to break the color barrier, or Jim Parker blocking for Hop Cassidy, or Cornelius Greene taking the field as our first black quarterback. So much is represented by something so simple.

I have received many awards that mean a lot; But no one has yet given me an award for my proudest achievement: my lasting marriage to Lorita, and our children, Debbie and Billy. My daughter Debbie is a businesswoman, but she knows more about sports—more about football, basketball, baseball—than eight-five percent of most men. We will be watching something, and she will say, "This is not good basketball, this is not good football, that is bad baseball." She understands. She will look over and say, "They're playing good football, or they're playing Cover-2." The marketing degree Debbie earned at Ohio State—when we made the move here, in part, for her—has led her to a successful career owning her own business.

Lorita sometimes slows me down and keeps me grounded with our kids. A good example is when Billy got a job with Coca-Cola while he was going to school at the University of Dayton. I told Billy what my dad told me: "You owe a job twenty minutes. You owe them twenty minutes every day." Billy was always there twenty minutes ahead of time, and they liked that. Hence, they had a job for him in Atlanta when he graduated. It was a good job and I wanted him to take it, but Billy wanted to teach. I told him, "Son, you can't beat this opportunity." We talked a little bit, but I did not get very far with him. Later that night, I told Lorita, "I have to call Billy. I can't let him pass this up."

Lorita reined me in. "That's what he wants to do," she said. "He wants to teach. Look what you did, and your folks tried to put you in music."

"No, I'm going after him," I persisted.

"Bill, you've got to back off," she insisted. Lorita saw it her son's way and talked me out of it. And she was right. Billy became a teacher and then a principal. He taught the kids in his school how to read, in one of the tough sections of Cincinnati, and he did it so well they moved him to administration. Today he is Assistant Superintendent for Cincinnati Public Schools. Just think. If he had listened to me, he would be selling soda pop. Instead, he is walking in my footsteps.

Billy did it on his own in teaching, just as I did in coaching. He and his wife Janet both have a couple of degrees, and a daughter Kennedi, and a son William Markus. He likes to be called Billy Markus, but I also call him Quattro, because he is the fourth William Myles. There is nothing more satisfying

in life than seeing your kids become good parents, seeing them doing it on their own. When I asked Billy to help tell my story, here is what he wanted to say. No father could be more proud:

Dad

Reflecting about your story has made me come to grips with things I value. In the positions that I have held—teacher, principal, administrator—and my role as a father, most of the decisions I made or roads I traveled were determined by what I was exposed to during my childhood. It is clear to me that money is not the determining factor of a young man's success. I have seen young people from families of wealth who were not positive contributors. I have sat with young people who did not have clothes to wear, food to eat, or a bed to sleep in, but they made it! They made it because someone believed in them.

Looking back, Dad, I was provided with everything I needed and about everything I wanted. But that is not why I am where I am. I'm here because I had parents who provided me a road to follow. The questions were not "Are you going to do it?" but rather "How are you going to do it?" The expectation was "You will be successful."

Sometimes in your life, Dad, people did not understand or celebrate your accomplishments. Yet when they needed something, you were the one who was always called. I didn't understand why you never complained, until you gave me the poem, "What Is Class?", with the line that says *you don't build yourself up by tearing others down.* Then I understood, Dad. You are class. Dr. J, OJ, Johnny Rodgers—those sports heroes of my youth were just people to me. You were my hero, Dad. I never wanted to wear sports stars' uniforms. I just wanted to wear your stuff, your uniform. Your Nebraska stuff. Your Buckeye stuff.

Dad, I never liked how some wanted just to tell the "Single Story" of your life, the sports guy story. Many years ago, you gave a speech about the scholar/athlete. You said the two must mesh—if you only have one, you said, you are either too soft or too hard. I am raising my son in that light. I don't want people to think he has only a single story. It wasn't about what you bought me or gave me. It was about teaching me to be a man.

People need to know, Dad, how you have been a difference maker, and I hope this book has accomplished that. You have touched many lives, and no, I was never jealous. I had something that no other player, student, friend, wife, or daughter has. I have your name, William Myles.

Billy

I look at other people who were having a good time while their kids were growing up, partying and things, while Lorita and I were sacrificing for our kids. For us, the family was what was important. The kids were the center of our lives. It paid off. And it could not have happened without Lorita.

It is not easy being a coach's wife. Lorita has grown up with it. She has been with me since our junior year in high school. Then I went into coaching and she has been a coach's wife ever since. Being educated, having her own degree from Central State University, a master's from the UMKC, and her own career in education has allowed her to have her own life. When I was on the road, she was both mother and father to Debbie and Billy. I could not have done what I did week after week during the recruiting season—leave on Monday morning and come home on Friday—if I had to worry about how she was doing at home with the kids, if she had been nagging because I was gone, or if she had not been a self-assured woman. One time after a Buckeye loss, a fan called her and asked if we "were going to sell our house because we needed to go." She laughed at them.

Lorita knew how I would be after a game we lost, how I would be after losing a blue chip recruit. She always knew what to do. She has always been there for me. And she's enjoyed the life. Sometimes it was tough, but there have been the many highs, the thrills, the perks! Lorita has enjoyed the life of a coach's wife. She can tell you the good places to eat in all the Big Eight and Big Ten towns, all the sights to see on the bowl trips. There is a secret to our marriage lasting all these years. I tell folks I make all the major decisions, it's just that nothing major has happened in the last fifty-seven years. When people ask me about those fifty-seven years, I explain I have really been married 114, because I have been doing "double time." Of course, Lorita's comeback to that is, "He's had twice the fun."

Life is a give and take, but the one thing that has never wavered has been our love. Every time we leave each other, we say, "24/7," meaning, "I love you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week." We never leave each other without saying that, and meaning it. It is also a kind of barometer. When I leave early in the morning for the Woody Hayes and my workout, it is usually around 5:15 a.m. I tell Lorita, "24/7."

Lorita might still be in bed, but she'll say "24/7."

But sometimes I will say 24/7 and she will stay quiet for a while. She does not do it often, but sometimes there is silence. I will wait, and then say again, cheerily, "24/7!"

Lorita will eventually grudgingly moan, "20 . . . 4 . . . 7." Of course, when that happens, I know something is wrong. I have goofed up somewhere. Now what did I do? The barometer is falling. But you know, it is a good barometer because it keeps little things from becoming big things.

Many Christmases ago, I gave Lorita a necklace that is a half of a gold disk. Her half has "LO" and Bill engraved under it. The other half is a mirror image that I wear myself. My half says "VE" and Lorita. How's that for being romantic! I never take mine off. I have worn it ever since I gave it to her. I have coached in it. I sleep in it. I shower in it. It never comes off, even when I go through the screener at the airport. You could say it is my "bling," but to each of us, it is a symbol of our everlasting love! Of all the trinkets, all the awards, all the trophies I have received, none even comes close to these two simple necklaces, which sum up the journey—the Myles Traveled—we have enjoyed together.

Epilogue

THE PROMISED LAND

I have told you of many barriers broken in my lifetime. Bill Willis in the NFL. Jackie Robinson in Major League Baseball. Brown v. Board of Education. The Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title IX. Willie Jeffries in Division I-A. Ernie Davis with the Heisman Trophy. Thurgood Marshall as an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court. The list is longer than that; and of course most recent among them was the election of our first black U.S. President. When President Obama was elected, one newspaper ran a political cartoon that hit home. The drawing showed the president on the steps of the Capitol, hand on the Bible, taking the Oath of Office. Standing at the railing below, looking up admiring him, were individual smiling caricatures of thirty-eight great black sports heroes. Among them stood Jesse Owens, Joe Louis, and Muhammad Ali. Tony Dungy, Wilma Rudolph, Ernie Davis, and Eddie Robinson were all watching. Jim Brown and Bill Russell gazed upward, as did Arthur Ashe and Wilma Rudolph. Jackie Robinson and Buck O'Neil were there. The list went on. Thirty-eight of them. All black. All athletes. All accomplished. All legendary. Titled "The Promised Land," the symbolism of that cartoon was obvious. It was a new day in history, a move to a different arena, another door opening for blacks, a dream that had not previously been available to the young black boy or girl. It paid homage to the influence of athletics in paving that way, yet acknowledged that now there was something more beyond the court, the diamond, the field.

What struck me in that cartoon was again my sense of *Place*, and how many of those famous people I had the fortune to meet or know—and learn from—in my lifetime. Of the thirty-eight legends in that cartoon, I counted fourteen I have been in the company of: Joe Louis, Jim Brown, Satchel Paige, Jesse Owens, Eddie Robinson, Hank Aaron, Jackie Robinson, Buck O'Neil, Muhammad Ali, Tony Dungy, John Thompson, Bill Russell, Doug Williams, and Art Shell. For a black athlete who always wanted to coach, what better mentors and role models?

Although my mother and father never lived to see the election of our black president, they lived long enough to see their three boys from the two-room black schoolhouse earn six college degrees. And they lived to see me break my own barriers.

Looking back on that Inauguration Day, I thought how long the road from Pilot Point, Texas, in 1921, that time and place where my parents formed their union, and how many lampposts lit my way. Penn School. Paseo YMCA. Westport. R. T. Coles. Lincoln High. Drake. Manual, Lincoln, and Southeast. Nebraska. The Biggs. That road started for me on the playgrounds of Kansas

City and ended on the mountaintop, at the pinnacle called the Horseshoe, the home of the Buckeyes.

I thought of eight years of high school coaching with a record of 45-29-3. I thought of fourteen years at Nebraska and Ohio State, with a combined record of 125-38-4. I thought of the six Big Eight and Big Ten conference championships we won. I thought of eight bowl wins, and of all the All-Americans on the teams that I coached. I remembered the Heisman Trophy winners. And of course, the national championship that was but ten minutes and one point out of reach. I thought of the accolades: The Key to Kansas City. The K.C. Call Coach of the Year. The Ohio Gold Award. The two awards at Drake. The Boulé. I thought also of all the players I have told you about, the guys who taught me as much as I taught them.

And I thought of the mentors. Teachers. Coaches. Role models. The great black athletes, Joe Louis, Jackie Robinson, Satchel Page, Buck O'Neil. Friends Bill Willis, Bill White, and Don Motley. Coaches Isaiah Banks, James McCreary, Jim Wilkerson, and Owen Lee. Perry Kirkpatrick and Bubbles Klice. Warren Gaer. Cecil Patterson. Eddie Robinson. Frank Broyles. Bob Devaney. Tom Osborne. Woody Hayes. Earle Bruce. Administrators Hugh Hindman, Rick Bay, and Jim Jones. Phyllis Bailey. The list is endless. They were like the prism in a lighthouse on a moonless night, a bright shining beacon of light that guided my way.

I have traveled miles, and so has America. When President Obama was first inaugurated, Lorita and I watched TV all day. We watched it all, switching between three channels. I thought it was so interesting! As I watched our president take the oath of office that day, my thoughts were, *how far we have come*. The next day, however, I went in to work and some people were not happy with it. I just went in and was very quiet. Some folks mentioned something negative and I just ignored it. They tried to make it because he was a Democrat, and I could accept that difference. But others made some more telling comments, teasing me, "Hey, you're running the world now." These personal comments and the pointed teases reminded me *how far we have yet to go*.

I wished my parents had been able to see the president's first inauguration, to see that milestone. I had just finished reviewing the Tulsa Riots and writing about how my father was caught up in that event. Who would have thought back on July 14, 1921, the day my parents were married, forty-four days after the darkness of the Tulsa Race Riot, that we would see our first black president in their children's lifetime. Although my mother did not live to see it, with her outlook and foresight as a Christian Science practitioner, she thought all things are possible. After all, she was the one who wanted me to go to an integrated college, because "the world isn't just black." Although she did not see it, I have to believe that in her lifetime she imagined it. Although she did not see it, her spirit was watching that day through the image in which my mother made me.

Most moving to me, out of everything that happened during that Inauguration Day, were all the black children who were interviewed and said, "Now I can be anything I want." I wonder how many of those children will someday become teachers or coaches? Doctors or nurses? Pastors or priests? Senators or

presidents? There are no higher callings. It was *Place* that January 20, 2009, just as *Place* has guided my life:

The place you seek is seeking you. I was lucky. My parents instilled values in me at an early age. Even in segregated times of limited opportunity, even in the face of unequal education, as far back as I can remember, Mom and Dad encouraged me that I could do anything I wanted. I did. All my life I did the only thing I ever wanted to do. Teach and coach.

Divine Principle brings need and supply together for mutual good. All I ever wanted to do was to coach. I did that, and I think darn well. In the process, I hope I instilled in the hundreds of young lives I touched the things my parents instilled in me. Work hard. Get an education. Do the right thing. Serve the Lord. Contribute to the mutual good.

The place you need needs you. My mother spoke of place. My father spoke of education. Woody spoke of paying forward. The three are intertwined. As I look back on my life, I hope I have lived up to ideals they set for me. My coaches, my teachers, my professors, all those adults in the neighbored back in Kansas City, all were there to guide me, to nurture me, to protect me. A part of all of them is who I am and who I became. I hope I have done them justice.

The benefit we receive must be rendered again, line for line, deed for deed, cent for cent, to somebody. Woody and Emerson were right. You have to pay forward. As I look ahead, I can see many of those young lives I was privileged to touch, to cross paths with, to mold—now paying forward, now passing the torch of my past to the generation of their future. A part of me will be carried forth in their good work long after I am gone. Paying Forward. It is the most satisfaction one can have. I have tried my best to do it. I challenge each of you to do the same.

Go Cardinals, Tigers, and Knights! Go Huskers! Go Buckeyes!

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PRAISE FOR BILL MYLES

"Read Bill's story; and as you do, you'll understand why, for me, Bill Myles has always been 'The Man'."

Archie Griffin, Two-time Heisman Trophy winner and CEO, The Ohio State University Alumni Association

"Bill was 15 when we put together the only Negro American Legion Baseball Team in the entire United States. Bill was a catcher, and you have to be tough to play that position. He was just an outstanding kid, and you could see it in his makeup even back then. For practice, we would play the ex-Kansas City Monarch ballplayers and we beat them! Those kids could play some ball."

Dan Motley, baseball coach and former executive director of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum

"It's hard to explain what it was like to grow up in a segregated environment, because it makes it sound as if you were penned up. On the contrary, we had a complete community. We had people who ran businesses in the neighborhoods; we had professional people. Our math teacher had a master's degree from the University of Kansas, our English teacher a PhD from the University of Chicago. We had another teacher who had a master's from Yale. Of course, most of those people were there because they couldn't teach anywhere else!"

Robert Wedgeworth, former chief executive officer for American Library Association, former university librarian at the University of Illinois, and former dean of the School of Library Science at Columbia University

"I didn't have in my life what I saw in the Myles home that day. I didn't see black. I didn't see white. I just saw love. I had never seen such love given to a son, and it was so genuine. I saw a family with so much tenderness that if affected me so deeply, and I sat there thinking, 'Gee, I wish I had this.'"

Bob Schnarr, Illinois pharmacist and Drake University Football teammate

"When we went back to Lincoln to teach, I was head football coach and Bill was my assistant. I knew the game, but Bill was a student of the game. I knew then that he was going to be a better coach than I was. He had a critical eye for the skills required and he followed sports religiously. Bill's music sheet was scorecards and his analysis of players and the game itself."

James Buford, high school teammate, College All-American, and fellow high school coach

"Coach [Myles] has always been a role model. I was one of those kids who teetered and straddled that line. I could just as easily have had a pistol in life instead of my success. But it was people like Coach, people who were always trying to do the right thing, who helped me."

Gary Brown, former player of Coach Myles, social worker, AAU basketball coach

"In 2006, the Kansas City Royals erected a statue of me at Royals Stadium. I asked Bill to speak. Bill could give a hallelujah pep talk. When he spoke at my statue unveiling, he was so impressive. You could hear the audience shouting, 'We love you, Bill,' and 'We miss you, Bill.' He made an impression on a lot of people. I don't think we as coaches realize that until later on in life."

Frank White, former player of Coach Myles, former Kansas City Royals second baseman, eight-time Gold Glove winner

"Bill came in at a time when Nebraska was going strong. There was a lot of interest and excitement in Nebraska football because we had won the National Championship in '70 and '71, and then Bill came here in '72. I just looked at Bill as a coach and thought that he would be excellent."

Tom Osborne, University of Nebraska

"The toughest time in all of Bill's coaching was when Woody was released. I, like most of the people in the stadium, did not see the incident happen. There was no replay screen then. It wasn't until I met Bill after the game that I found out what had happened, because Bill was standing right beside him."

Lorita Myles recounting the night Woody Hayes was fired

"Bill Myles became the most positive influence on my life, in a way I almost cannot put into words. Bill was just the most consistent educator you could ever imagine. It is the most difficult thing you could ever try to do. I teach young doctors, and I have been through many experiences—in the NFL, as a surgeon, and as a parent. Bill had a way of being disciplined, but in a fashion that was real, true, and not selfish. He molded me, and it was more about love than it was about anything else. Bill was just an amazing teacher. The value is priceless. Every day that I envision myself helping to educate young people, I am reminded of the integral part that Bill Myles has been in my life. He achieved true hero status in my eyes."

John Frank, former Ohio State University tight end, Super Bowl winner with the San Francisco 49ers, and surgeon

"Ohio State is lucky to have Bill Myles. He's been around so long and has so much knowledge of that place. It's a great story. It's inspirational. It's the American Dream. More people should know Bill Myles, because he is like the Jackie Robinson of coaches. So what if he didn't make the big dollars? He is a hero to so many athletes because he was there for them. If you take away

from *Myles Traveled* Bill's attitude, no matter what you do, you have a chance to be successful."

Jim Lachey, Ohio State Univeristy Football All-American, three-time NFL Pro Bowler, Super Bowl winner, OSU Football color commentator, founder of The Lachey Company

"At the time we first split athletic administration by sport—rather than by sex—for all of the women who worked with Bill, he just got along with them beautifully. I always felt good about that. I was also impressed with the fact that Bill was knowledgeable about all the sports in the program. He wasn't just a football man. He understood the other sports and understood the women's sports. Bill was supportive of them. I think that Bill's background of being a minority—he was challenged in ways that were different from the women, but it was that same feeling—gave us sensitivity for each other that might not have existed otherwise. Each of us understood what the other had gone through."

Phyllis Bailey, former Ohio State University associate athletic director

"When I wrote *Back Porch Swing*, I gave Bill a small scene. In the book, Lance Stoler and his relatives are going into the Woody Hayes Center on a recruiting visit, and the first person they meet is the character modeled after Bill Myles. If the book is ever turned into a movie, I am sure Morgan Freeman would play Bill's part: Morgan's deep, distinct, melodious voice, his stately presence, and the twinkle in his eye—all would be the perfect character of Bill Myles.'

Dr. Allen Bohl, former college athletic director, speaker, and author of Back Porch Swing

"Bill was instrumental in starting the program for athletes who left school. I came back and finished up at Ohio State in Bill's program because I wanted to get my degree as a Buckeye! I wasn't privy to the lengths Bill had to go to in order to make the program happen for me, but Bill battling to get that done for me fits right with who he is—his conviction and his concern are for the student athletes. I was not surprised to learn that he had to roll up his sleeves and get a little dirty to make that happen. I have seen him as a family man and teacher, and as a coach who really did put his players first. You never got the sense that it was about him. It was always about his players, the team, the university. You could feel it any time you were in his presence."

Clark Kellogg, Ohio State University trustee, CBS broadcaster, former OSU and NBA player, VP of Player Relations for the Indiana Pacers

"Bill Myles has a very solid foundation of what he believes in, a very solid faith, a very solid confidence in what's right. If you think about a young person getting ready to tackle whatever they are going to tackle, I'm a believer—and Bill is, too—that you can't do that alone. If you think that you are going to be able to handle everything by yourself, without something bigger than you, you're in trouble. Bill Myles always had something—it being his

faith—which was always going to supersede any of his personal feelings, any of his hardships, any of his struggles, any of his excuses. He always had that faith which formed him to handle what had been, and what will be."

Jim Tressel, former Ohio State University Football coach

"Without Bill Myles, the success of Ohio State Tennis wouldn't be there. Bill can tell, after talking with a kid for ten minutes, which ones are going to give you a handful. There are NBA and NFL programs that spend hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to check the background of players they are going to draft in the high rounds. Bill Myles knew character from talking to a kid, and he didn't need much time to tell you who was going to be able to survive in my program. When I brought recruits in on a visit, he would spend fifteen or twenty minutes talking to them. I haven't seen anybody bat ninety percent on judging character like Bill did. I ran all my recruiting through Bill Myles."

Ty Tucker, Ohio State University Director of Tennis,
2009 ITA National Coach of the Year

CREDITS

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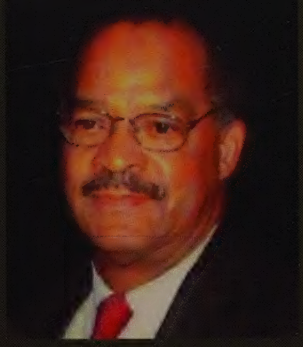

William (Bill) Myles was born in Kansas City, Missouri on November 21, 1936. He has lived a fascinating life in athletics, from segregated Kansas City and Negro Leagues Baseball to an up and coming high school coach, and then an insider in the country's most powerful college football programs. Bill coached with the giants at the University of Nebraska and Ohio State — Bob Devaney, Tom Osborne, Woody Hayes, and Earle Bruce. With a career record of 170 wins, 67 loses, 7 ties, and 8 Big Eight/Big Ten championships, Bill coached in 14 college bowl games, including the Rose, Sugar, Cotton, Orange, Fiesta, and Gator Bowls. Bill then served 22 years as Associate AD at Ohio State.

Along his journey, Bill noticed everything. Consequently, this former history teacher became the "go-to" expert for athletic history, black history, and sports trivia. Bill's compassion for others and common-sense approach to football have endeared him in the hearts of his players and colleagues. Bill's wisdom and lifetime experiences make him the consummate funny and meaningful storyteller. With a bachelor's degree from Drake University and a master's degree from Central Missouri State, along with a booming voice with distinct enunciation, Myles is a sought-after public speaker and recipient of a long list of awards and honors.

Bill and his high school sweetheart, Lorita Jane Thompson, are celebrating 57 years of marriage. They are the proud parents of two children and two grandchildren. Although Bill is retired from coaching, he still works out each morning in the Woody Hayes Athletic Facility. He resides with his family in Worthington, Ohio.

Steve Davis worked with Bill Myles in the writing of *Myles Traveled*. Steve is a 1973 graduate of The Ohio State University. He has had a forty-one-year career in resource management with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Among other things, Steve's speaking and writing skills have enhanced his public information activities. He has authored and co-authored many scientific publications and he is the recipient of several public service awards. Steve and Jenny, his wife of forty-one years, reside in Pandora, Ohio.

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"If you embrace Bill's attitude as a result of reading *Myles Traveled*, no matter what you do, you will have a chance to be successful."

Jim Lachey,
OSU Football All-American, Three-Time AFL Pro-Bowler, and Super Bowl Winner

"*Myles Traveled* is a model of how to live your life."

Gary Black,
Retired teacher, school administrator, and Lincoln High Football player under Coach Myles

"After you read Bill's story, you'll understand why, for me, Bill Myles has always been 'The Man.'"

Archie Griffin,
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